

*POEMS IN THE
MODERN SPIRIT*

Addressed to the Rising Generation

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POEMS IN THE MODERN SPIRIT.

WITH

THE SECRET OF CONTENT :

A SONG FOR THE HOUR.

BY

CHARLES CATTY.

" There is a budding morrow in mid-night."

—KEATS.

LONDON :
WALTER SCOTT, 24 WARWICK LANE,
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TO THE MEMORY OF
WORDSWORTH, SHELLEY, COLERIDGE, KEATS :
THE FOUR POETS OF OUR AGE
WHO, IN THE WIDE DIVERSITY OF THEIR GENIUS, HAVE
MOST DELIGHTED AND INSTRUCTED HIM,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR
IN GRATEFUL REVERENCE.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE chief poem of this series is more especially addressed to those who have cast off the dead-weight of tradition, and are now eagerly embracing the truths of science, in the firm belief that they will derive thence, not an unfruitful knowledge merely, but the materials of a sure and lasting index of right conduct. To the hopeful and the ardent of the rising generation has appeal been made ; but before all to the tolerant and clear-sighted among these : for they alone will be open to confess in what great need we stand of a more than theoretic incitement to virtue who have refused credence to the idea—itself so sovereign an incitement—of a reward beyond the grave. They alone will profoundly sympathise with the great hurt to be sustained by humanity in the destruction of its oldest, fairest dream, its fondest hope, and its most potent consolation.

It has been the author's earnest endeavour to show how, in the healing lapse of time, this aching void may be bridged over with a new structure of hope ; to briefly indicate the lines upon which the life we know may be compelled to yield a fuller and less fleeting satisfaction ; to point, as strenuously as might be, to the single comprehensive truth which will emerge ere long from the last of its innumerable disguises—that, namely, which

proclaims in louder and yet louder tones that Virtue is no other than Self-Interest, deeply understood ; that the higher Self-Interest is, beyond all fear of lasting misinterpretation, the sublime Moral Tendency so long held to be inscrutable, unnaturally caused, and thus divine. He has endeavoured to show how, by consenting to limit the horizon of our being to a brief term of years on earth, by concentrating with redoubled energy our hopes and efforts upon the legitimate aims of this short life, existence may acquire the compensating breadth and fulness to which we must eternally aspire. He has laid all possible stress upon the cultivation of each faculty possessed by man—physical and mental, generic and individual—as a prime means to this end. Believing that the idea of original sin—the numbing sense of our inability to live or even think as we might wish—may be most fitly likened to that grievous load which fell from the back of Christian in the immortal *Progress*, he has striven to depict humanity delivered from this overpowering sense of the futility of their best aims and deeds : travelling onward joyously, inspired by a worthy confidence in high resolve, conscious of the effective force breathed into them with life itself, and fearing not

To venture, without other aid
Than strength bequeathed them, early exercised,
Valorous upon the open sea of life !

From all who have ever entertained any doubts—those grim spectres that scruple not to visit the most faithful minds in their dark hours—he claims a patient hearing.

Nothing is absolutely certain, it is said. May not a reasonable consideration of the grounds of hope and belief contribute to entrench them from assault? Genuine doubt is never unfruitful, or to be scorned. From those who will stand opposed to him, therefore, the author of the present volume would entreat forbearance on the sole plea of absolute sincerity and a profound conviction. If they will hear him patiently, they will encounter at least no rash or unimaginative animosity to a religion which has carried the world far forward on the path of progress ; which, in its sweet teaching, infolds so many great and elevating truths—

Are we not brothers—we who yearn and strive
For some poor share of happiness, who long
For the assurance of reward at last
For so long hoping and long suffering here ?
Must we be sundered by unmanly strife
Who are so wondrously akin—who know
Like needs, like aspirations and like fears ?—
Whose undistinguishable woes are such
That one is but the echo of the other
And leaves the same dull misery behind.

For the rest, though born into an age of science, he has not found the fair face of Nature dulled for him by the exact scrutiny to which she has been subjected ; if any change is visible there it is one of increased expressiveness. He looks forward to the time when man shall discover, mirrored in her meanest process, some ethical analogy, some clue to a better understanding of the fit

and scientifically right in all procedure. The gross spirit of materialism attributed to modern research and its applauders is no necessary element in such inquiry. Nature would not put off her veil of mystery though we should know her inmost structural secret. Poetry abides for ever in her forms. Dryads still linger in the trees, and nymphs keep their home in her unviolated crystal springs : but other nymphs and dryads than classic antiquity has sung—creations of the shaping memory, spirits from the twilight profound of association ; such influences and palpable spiritualities as Wordsworth knew, and taught us how to name.

LONDON, *March* 1888.

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The Secret of Content.

ARGUMENT.

INVOCATION.

I.

Pleasure a harvest, whose dry seeds must be early sown—The instincts of growth compared with reason—The dawn of a brighter age anticipated—We are but links in a tremendous chain—Nature admonishes, but we turn to loftier dreams, the comfort of many an unlovely home—What hope, then, if not Life beyond the Grave?—The new creed unripe—Man a swimmer, venturing without stay upon the sea of life—A picture of the fallen who cannot rise—Leave for the fallen to rise the Higher Law—Futurity an ocean prospect—The isles of Perfection—Perfection no dream—Liberty arising—Freedom of thought and speech—A law born firm rooted in the frame of things—Poesy continues her sweet function, and walks hand-in-hand with Truth.

II.

What is the Secret of Content?—All nature proclaims it the right use of faculty—This use examined—Trespass, Self-Detriment—Nature, pitiless—Man, the Higher Nature, Compassionate ; teaching by reason what was taught perforce—The disease of Atrophy—instanced in Speech—talents wasted—ignorance—Knowledge too early abandoned—A picture of the Way of Knowledge—Leisure to be purchased—The remoteness of Knowledge—Its power to illuminate life—influence conduct—A new type to spring from Man—The mysterious prophecy of greatness heard in Music—We shall not see it—Earthly Separation—Love : its place in Nature—Parting assuaged—Affection earthly in its implications—Its beauty none the less—The children of faith addressed—Reason our chart and compass—Circumstance—Will the outcome of Experience—Strife needless—The triumph of Sin—The re-awakening—Virtue, Self-Interest—Science the herald of Duty—The truth of all creeds survives—A new Moral Code based on Natural Law—Retrospect—A Vision of Progress—Exhortation—The Secret of Content resumed.

The Secret of Content.



“ Powers depart,

Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat ;
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse or wane,
Duty exists ; immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms
Which an abstract intelligence supplies ;
Whose kingdom is where time and space are not.”

—WORDSWORTH.

“ Weiss doch der Gärtner, wenn das Bäumchen grünt,
Dass Blüth and Frucht die Künft'ge Jahre zieren.”

—GOETHE.

PERSUASION, that with murmurous soft arts
Of accents musical dost use to lend
Harmonies fitful as the rising wind
To thine own instrument sweet measured speech,
Guide now this invoking hand—not formed
To the proud ministry of song : breathe in
The unsought cadence that comes linked with truth,
Sincerity's round tone, brief even as strong.
And thou, Compassion, with thy tender lips
And magical sweet tones do never wound,
Teach me a melody shall gain the ears
Of sufferers in secret, whom nor scorn
Nor the cold reasons of Philosophy
Have power to awaken from enchanted dreams
Do minister to wonder like a child's.

I.

O that our early years knew some wise friend,
One having travelled in the ways of truth
E'en from his infancy, and acquired skill
To use each gift implanted in the mind
Slowly perfecting it to its fit end !
What might not life be did we early learn
How pleasure is a harvest whose dry seeds
Must with all patience be prepared and sown
Upon the soil that is most meet for them :
Else are we fallows do yield little joy
To others, and still less unto ourselves !

Who with kind eloquence has sought to paint
For youthful eyes the weary discontent
Dogs unrelenting the unfruitful powers
Both of the mind and body ? There are few,
Methinks, now living in the world, who strive,
Or know how they should strive, with burning words
To teach the law immutably decreed
By Nature : that all faculty restrained,
Nipped in the bud, unexercised, untried,
Brings with its atrophy a dull disease,
Yearning all impotent to things unknown.

See how the intellect is formed and grows.
'Tis like a flower that puts forth new shoots
That ever upward climb, and turn, and grasp,
With strength tenacious, stations for fresh growth :

Doth it not gladden in the sun that warms
Its largening stature, and prepare new flights
Bold as it never was, and strong and free ;
Content to expand it in the wholesome light,
Made happy by the winds and showers of heaven,—
A perfect thing, obedient unto law ?
Yet see it gain the shadow : it is dull,
Listless and drooping, without power to seize
New vantage ground ; it languishes and soon
Puts forth a harvest of pale flowers that else
Had been the bright insignia of its strength,
Rich-coloured—long reluctant in decay.
'Tis thus with eager impulse that the mind,
Most like a flower, adds unto itself
New growths drawn from the vicinage ; and turns,
Upcoiling and recoiling, to use strength
Ever augmented—fed by each wind and cloud,
Each sunbeam of experience whose gay warmth
Thrills its young being with an ecstasy
To climb and climb until the point be reached
Where in all freedom it may crown at last
Its perfect structure with maturest blooms—
The sceptre, orb, and diadem of its powers.

How marvellous the instinct which informs
All growth ! 'Tis reasonable without power
To render just account of that it does :
Surer than reason, which is prone to err,
And of alternatives to choose the false :
Hence all our misery. O we may hope
That in the immeasurable lapse of years

This Reason, the fair crown of all true life,
Will most unerringly direct the deed,
Show present duty, and things as they are—
Not as we wish them in our purblind pride.
Haply some being in whom reason lives,
Nor lurks nor falls extinct, will, looking back,
Perceive in man the likeness of a type—
Faint adumbrations of a final state
To which he is advancing with firm step :
Not yet attained, but gloriously in view ;
As the far sunrise that o'er dreary plains
Sheds soft the cool calm splendours of the dawn,
Touching to radiance departed points,
Luring him onward with the glints that play
On present things, near things, his now abode.
O that we too, far gazing to the bound
Of the dim future, could behold that light
Whose first faint promise in the awful pall
Low brooding on our sense we do discern,
And by its loveliness have learnt to gauge
The ineffable splendours of the coming day.
Hark, hark to the awakened birds that still,
Solemn and mirthless, but in suave content ;
Trustful, expectant,—not in eager loudness,
But with a fragmentary, nascent joy,
Sure by their instinct of the coming sun ;
Cheerful as travellers who await the day,
And till it cometh, quietly prepare ;—
Discourse in low sweet twitterings, hidden in trees
Where night and gloom and silence still hold sway.
Ye poets and philosophers, whose sense,

Your princely heritage, doth make perceive,
While still the night lies weltering on the land,
Promises in the grey of a silver leaf
Turned eastward—a pale lustre on the bough
There where its sombre round doth match the sky ;
Who, looking with wide eyes into the deeps
Soft slumbering beneath—the still dim deeps
Blent and confounded in a moveless waste,—
Catch the first augury of movement there—
The fern upspringing 'neath a load of dew—
Slow mystic shapes that hover on the sward—
Sounds of activity where all was dead—
Scents of unfolding, and the twitching stir
Of leaves and tendrils that unbend from sleep,
And doubtful, eye the glimmer in the wood :—
O ye whose ken surpasseth our poor powers,
What of the morning—will it never come ?
Ah, how can promises content poor man,
Worn out with watching and most like to die—
Stretched moveless, the dear light in his dead eyes ;
Encumbering the soil which, an he woke,
He should find glowing with gold beams and warmth !
And ere his body shall have sunk within
The embracing earthiness, lo ! a thousand flowers
Such as he dreamed of shall press round his head
And offer his cold nostrils all their scent !
The woods, soft roaring in the matin breeze,
Shall sing his dirges, and shed one by one
The blossoms he foretold upon his clay—
Blent with the meadow, to whose quickened soil
He shall have added but a senseless clod !

Matter for tears and for dark pondering,
Pitiful despair and wild fierce vain revolt !
Is this our destiny ; are we but links
In a tremendous chain, all useless else ?
Are we as vessels that a plastic hand,
A patient power refashions, and casts back
Into the general mass, and with new skill
Gained in the fashioning addresses still
Unweariable patience to the task
Of moulding our poor remnants to new forms,
Each one the worthier—until at length,
Brought to perfection, a last form shall stand
Instinct with fitness for the ends of life,
Immelliorable, so made permanent
By fire of the approval it commands ?

'Tis Nature whispers it. In proud disdain
We turn to nourish fonder hopes. And yet
Her still small voice, unheeded through long æons,
Quenchless, persistent as the drop that wears
The stone's proud obduracy,—piercing grown,
Bids us be humble, and we turn with tears
And loathing from her salut^ory speech. *a/*
Is truth not priceless ? It was ever this ;
And aye did loathing, like a gaunt sleuth-hound,
Follow its footsteps,—never rend the chase.
And grief—unutterable anguish—is
The birth-throe doth attend all lasting change.

In humble homes where poverty and care,
Narrowing circumstance, and the strife these breed,

Make life a barren thing—almost all dull ;
Where no fulfilment of the innocent wish,
The natural yearning or the pure intent,
Comes to relieve the penury of days
Passed one like the other ; where the night brings
No wholesome quickening of dreamless sleep,
But wears interminably to the dawn—
One long procession of the total life ;
Where Love dies young, and Beauty is consumed ;
And even Affection is transformed to Grief—
Thrust back upon itself and all defaced,
Showing by contraries do bring repulse
Where was sore need of love returned : O there,
In such an atmosphere—bereft of light,
Where fantasy plays not, nor any gleam
Caught from the world's fairness, nor the glamour
Shed by bright poesy on this grey life :
Where all these are not, O what hope, alas !
What hope, then, if not life beyond the grave ?

Deep in her heart of hearts the unloved mother,
Soured by the scorn and apathy of all,
Deep in her heart's depth cherishes a dream
And ponders it in silence when alone ;
When respite from her thankless toils hath given
One little hour's sweet quietude and rest.
In it are pictured in most vivid hues
All she has missed, all she had hoped to win :
Sympathy—fond tender love—affection,
Lavished, nor stinted nor too soon withheld ;
Kindness and gentleness do rouse the like

In our own breasts, and pleasure in the shewing :
All that the human heart—so great, so good,
Were it permitted to be its true self—
Yearns to find place for in a mocking world
(Whose mockery is very like despair),
A cold, hard, bitter world that will think ill,
Nor reckon the long suffering has dulled
The erst quick sympathies and clenched the hand
Had else been outstretched in impulsive love.
O silent mourner with your hoarded dream
That saith, A little while and these are thine :
O hardened women fallen in repute,
That meant the good had fate been less unkind,
Hurrying through life, and barring out all thought
Save some dim thought of mercy—O what hope,
What hope then, if not life beyond the grave !

So we could picture in their naked truth,
No pang withholden, no dumb anguish missed,
All miseries—all sorrows of our kind,
Seeing the long succession of rebuffs,
Jeers, taunts, hates, disappointments and mishaps,
Here breeding madness, there the dreadful crime :—
I say it were enough to blanch the hair,
And freeze the laughter on our lips for aye,
For very pity that such things should be !
Happily we are unconscious of the most ;
Our very friend's mute tragedy is hid :
Deeming him strong, we marvel at his fall,
To which all tended, even his jest and smile,
Could we have well appraised them. Seeing this is,

And cannot yet be other, let us leave
To these their hope and let it ease their load
Which by none other solace may be eased.
For the great rule of life shall supplement
Yon sole incentive to the good and true,
Resteth on hidden knowledge, nor is ripe,
Nor to be apprehended of the many,
But of the few, who with stout limb, bold heart,
Fear not to venture, without other aid
Than strength bequeathed them—early exercised,
Valorous upon the open sea of life.

As when the bather, striking from the shore,
Knows sudden how the live and breathless deep
Hath him in thrall, disparted from his stay
And firm security, the accustomed land ;
And while he shudders to be so alone,
Feeble and inexperienced in the mode
Of his new progress, feels the buoyant wave
Clasp him with pleasant tumult to its breast ;
And with his free limbs joying in their play
Shoulders heroic through the scented brine ;
While ever, amid buffets and the surge
Of the strong element, he looks afar,
Past where the bubbles rising stream to meet
His labouring nostrils, to the weed-hung rock
That lone and darksome, circled by a splash
Of luminous green ripples, rears its head
With promise of sweet easement on its breast :—
So even Man, now striking from the shore
His stay and firm security hereto ;

Strong, self-reliant, but amazed withal,
Pardonably timorous at the plunge
From self-abandoned foothold into deeps
Do thrill with a vague mystery his frame,—
Launches impassioned by a sense of power
And innate buoyancy through the chill waves,
Nor longer dreads their majesty once known.

O sturdy swimmer, joying in the play
Of power whose independence is assured,
Nor prop nor stay, save by the fancy formed—
And so made some part actual, e'er was
Whereby thou might'st augment the seasoned force
In thyself resident. What Nature gave
That know sufficing, with due exercise,
To bear thee up in ordinary seas.
Yet since old habitude doth leave sure trace
And thou, not fashioned to the course, must faint ;
Gaze ever onward to the haven rock
(And many are the rocks of ease are sown
With others perilous upon life's sea) ;
So steer thy voyaging that thou attain
The timely refuge ere the storm-cloud burst
And whelm thee nerveless in the blinding squall.
To thee is given the faculty to know
All ports, all refuges, wilt thou but learn ;
For early in thy youth the book lies spread,
Most legible, and writ by travelled hands.
O trust not the vain counsellors who use
To humble in the dust a glorious being,—
Bidding him languish in deep self-distrust,

Unfitting him for all that he might do
So he were confident, unhindered in his hopes,
Unfettered by the desolating weight
Of sin original, that like a black Despair
Hangs ravening at his heels to drag him down !
God gave thee a rich heritage : look well
Thou put it to large usance—for this given,
He speeds thee parting, and is heard no more.

See how a man, dishonoured for some fault
Born of his weakness, must take lower ground.
In him dies aspiration, and he sinks
Beneath the oppressive virtue of the strong :
Since no least effort to regain the height
He sadly eyes is met by half-way help,
That whole-souled help, untainted by distrust
Or stern suspicion, which alone can raise
The poor defaulter to esteem again
By giving him again his self-esteem.
But, an you trust him, see what smiles of hope—
What passion of resolve to merit this
Your faith, that deep down in his heart
He knows hath warranty within himself !
You do but kindle into living flame
Fires that have smouldered but that cannot die
While breath remains to feed a new resolve.—
Entreat him courteously, as one was meant
For noble ends, and haply shall attain them ;
Speak of his heritage—the power that lies
Within him to reshape his errant course ;
And for the past, save as a warning, let it die !

Cast from him like a transitory growth,
A withered branch that, fallen from the tree,
Leaves uncontaminate the parent stem.
Sound his good qualities—they cannot lack :
Show all their high utility to serve
Him as he little thinks—too abject now,
Too utterly cast down by the deep scorn
He has been taught is merited from those
Whom kinder fates have sheltered from the storm
That, had it shaken them, had laid them low.
Teach him reliance and just self-esteem,
Showing the futility of the desires
Brought all his misery—or grant them just,
Natural, but to be otherwise fulfilled.
Thus strengthened he goes forth another man,
His larger self, unburdened of his load.

O it were glorious so we might pluck
All hindrances to virtue from the path
Of men and women fallen in the world !
Though free to rise, they lie there where they fell,
Since, risen, we still count them with the fallen.
'Tis an old error that hath served its turn,
And the day cometh of a wiser law :
Leave for the fallen to rise, to lave the mire—
Casting it from them as the withered bough
By the tree cast : this is the higher law.
For evil is but in the ill effect,
And nothing evil that doth harm no man.

As men look in their dreams so do we stand

And gaze out o'er the æons yet to come.
A various prospect ! Like yon summer sea
The swimmer traverses 'tis wide unrolled,
Dipping to the horizon. The near waste
Shows leaden in the light of a grey day,
Fraught with rocks perilous, dark straits
Where the churned waters greedily embrace
Prone on a reefy bed—their tossing arms
Flung heavenward in a frenzy like despair ;
Or hurl them headlong into caves of night,
Crashing reverberant, to die in sobs
Far in upon a subterranean beach.
Look now beyond. See where the sunlight pours
Its broad warm splendour over leagues of blue.
A million diamond-points lie burning there :
Hark ! hear ye not the music of the waves ?
O for a shallop to go drink the breeze
Is lingering like cool kisses on hot brows,
To touch yon isles—yon visionary isles—
Like isles sown in a sunset, but more fair !
Low lie they, with a crest of purple woods,
Fretted with bays—deep inlets of retirement,
Where waves and winds and trees softly intone
One blended harmony of peaceful life,
Rich, calm, and prodigal of all delights
Can lengthen out the days into one long
And various contentment. 'Tis no dream !
These hues in less intensity we know.
These are our woods, and these our summer isles ;
This life is but the heightening of our own,
Fulfilment of the promise that is here

In the delicate blossom creaming on the bough.
These deep delights that never pall or pale,
Springs of unending happiness, are here
And do salute us, but encumbered o'er
With imperfection that is ours, not theirs :
Faults of the sense, that cannot now endure
Such brightness but with pain must seek the shade.
O were it not that Fancy, the proud gift
Moves our just reverence, is but a blending
And subtle interfusion of things real—
Things best remembered and most worthy this ;
That in new order, and from all disjoined
Of temporal and immature—not part
And parcel of their essence, seem new things,
Immeasurably transcending all we find :
Were this not, no least semblance could be framed
Of an existence should afford whole joys—
Fuller and less fleeting than our own.
These reasoned hopes are more than a desire :
They stand firm-footed on the solid earth—
Proof-positive, sciential, and exact,
Needing but time for their fruition. Ah !
We who look onward with fond yearning eyes
Shall not behold them in their fruited prime ;
Nor are we worthy. But the blossom blows ;
And soft the wind, deflowering the stalk,
Strews as in idleness the turf. The sun
More hotly darts his beams. The unnumbered birds
Wanton with promise in their present need,
And know not what they do—culling and singing
Without thought for the morrow. The day dawns

And healing suns improve the woeful waste,
Patient and slow. The Night, with her sweet damps,
Worketh invisibly her new surprises.
Frost, blight, the wanton birds, and the fell storm
Descending with cruel swoop, work out one end,
All forces blent to the resultant gain.
Winter alone hath risen from the land :
She is gone hence, and never will return.
No more her sway shall bind the unfruitful earth
In a mute bondage. Liberty is springing—
The sweetest flower that ever sought the sun :
Freedom to speak the very inmost thought
Born to the mind travailing—without fear
Of bigotry, that in an elder age
Had heaped the faggot and applied the brand,
Piously murmuring a text confused.
Duty remains. Nor is the smile less fair
Upon her face than when the mountain bard
Drew inspiration from its peace, and sang
Undying numbers in a dying cause.—
Duty remains, our sovereign monitress,
Our stay and strength, our beacon in the night,
Sole absolute, and law impersonate :
Whom to obey is happiness and life,
Whom disobey is misery and death.

This is the age of ages. It hath seen
Such revolution in the minds of men
Shall not find parallel. A law is born,
Firm-rooted in the frame of things, shall last
Till earth put off her nature ; a new creed

Stands legible for all, and will afford
Unto high aspiration highest meed,
Bating no measure of the wholesome awe
Eternally infolds the Whence and Whither.
Nor deem that Poesy—that flower of truth,
That blossom of all knowledge—shall grow pale
Transplanted to the living air of heaven :
She shall burn gorgeously, her ray turned in
Upon the imminent concerns of man ;
His needs her theme, as in the elder times,
His variable lot her constant care :
Soother and healer, singing voice of hope,
The wings to bear fond fantasy to realms—
No arbitrary paradise—meet realms,
Spheres of the possible by reason shown,
More lovely, as more fitted to our needs.
Ever as now shall the fair face of earth,
Wherein we trace the likeness of our moods,
Be mirrored in clear poesy, and shown
Doubly significant ; analogy,
Tracing new kinship in all natural forms,
Shall draw thence nigh innumerable truths,
And fill the cup of knowledge to the brim—
Each newer truth a weapon to preserve
Man from himself, whose suicidal rage,
Blind ignorance, unphilosophic pride,
Rear the sole barrier has shut him out
These weary years from freedom and content.

II.

O WOULD ye learn the secret of content ?
Ye that are valorous, whom stern resolve
Hath freed from the long tyranny of Use—
Of faiths built on tradition, and the weak
Poor dim desire that, seeking through the world,
Finding nor happiness, nor any share
Of the proud heritage it deemed its own
As by a birthright and unearned, looks next
Into the Unsearchable, and finds peace there :
Would ye then learn this secret of content ?
I come, no prophet, but as one informed
By blowing of yon flower, and the gay ease,
The glad tranquillity of all fulfils
Its measure of utility on earth.
Who would not list to me, so I could bring
New tidings of near happiness to him ?
Have ye not heard it in the passing wind ?
Air is grown eloquent, and vocal earth :
All Nature is conspiring to proclaim
In one loud harmony of sound the news.—
Yet truth is never new, nor all unknown,
Nor secret—save in wearing a disguise.

Say, what is pleasure ? Doth it e'er reside
In things that are external to the mind ?
Where shall we seek for it—how recognise
This fugitive flies ever out of sight
In the beyond ?—'Twill satisfy desire ?

What is desire ? A craving of the flesh
Or spirit, that imperiously demands—
Not food alone—but fitting exercise
Of faculty inherent, for due growth.
No deed, then, unsubservient to the growth
Of faculty, but brings with it disease ;
All acts do minister to this prime end
Bring pleasure in their train, with calm content.
What, then, were happiness, an not the sum
Of hourly acts best fitted to improve
All faculties ? What, then, were discontent,
An it were not the leaving unfulfilled
Some needs imperative do crave their food ?
Alas, we are perverted ! We ignore
How instinct points the goal, but not the path.
We trench upon our neighbour's ground to gain
Immediate satisfaction for desire.
Had we not Reason we were lost—her lamp
Lies ready to our hand. Who heedless treads
Shall stumble to his hurt. Life's plain is broad,
And traversed by innumerable paths ;
Many the travellers—yet each might pass
Unjostled of the throng so he but trod
With a nice caution—taking no man's ground,
Yet pacing with firm front upon his own.
Could each but know that trespass is his bane—
Sole bar to perfect happiness on earth,
There were no trespassers. The hour will come
When from a maxim of philosophy
This truth shall grow familiar unto all :
The earliest instilled into the youth,

The cardinal observance of the man,—
Mere prudence of the world—self-interest.

Nature is pitiless : her blow falls straight
Upon the offender ; but in Man there lives
A new force, born of his warm sympathy :
Compassion, that doth love to achieve the end
By means that are less wasteful. Penalty
He hath been privileged to mitigate,
Teaching by reason that was taught perforce :
Himself a power to accelerate
The onward march to freedom and content.

See how a flower that hath gained the shade
Hangs droopingly, her vigorous increase
And all her dower of immingled leaves
But serving to o'erburthen with their load.
As one that hungers for a look of love
And vainly courts her lover's eye withdrawn—
Resting impartial upon all around
Save only there where she would have it rest :—
So turns the flower beseeching to the sun,
And pines for that he lavishes on all
Save her alone for whom it is her life.
And if, perchance, a momentary gleam
Fall like a cascade of warm gold adown
The wood's tiered galleries, and softly plunge
Her, where she sitteth, in a glory,—then,
How doth she gladden and upraise her head !—
Pensive, as one fain would be gay, though sad ;
For soon, she knows, her happiness must pass.

So even the mind, like a fair climbing plant,
Puts forth her increase in the years of youth,
And learns to love the knowledge which is light,
And which is life. Too soon, alas ! the world,
Casting her shadow on the expanding bloom,
Swiftly arresting the fair increase, dooms
It to long night. Yet when occasion falls,
Like a slant sunbeam, lo ! the remembered joy,
The early ecstasy of opening powers, returns,
With short-lived promise of a tardy spring.
Have ye not seen who with his unshaped thought
Did travail, and essay to paint the glow
And pleasurable tumult of emotion
Some moving scene or deed had bred in him—
Bright memories that hasty words profane ?
Full of his thought and of its moving greatness,
Still mindful of the spell it wrought in him,
Behold him launch forth, and ere well begun,
Stop—hesitate—and with unready tongue
Slip back upon the jargon of the street,
Patch o'er his poem with old threadbare rags,
And, having ended, heave a passing sigh.

Mark well that sigh ! For in it is revealed
The wide distinction of his thought and word :
All that he felt—the little he could say,
The strong need was for saying, the unrest
And sense of pleasure missed is left behind.
If all our feelings could be told in words
Might flash them to the hearer without loss,
Life were more beautiful by half. The mind

Is like a dumb thing that must hear and see
All loveliness and never say 'tis fair.
Man's loftiest experience is untold ;
And the warm impulse, rising in the heart,
Finds narrow outlet at the best, or none ;
Silent we sit, and know what others feel,
Yet dare not trust ourselves to speak, lest all
We would bestow of sympathy should turn,
In our poor parlance, to unwelcome things—
Humbling, presumptuous, inept, ill-timed :
The loving thought made odious by the word.

Mark now the man who, severed from pursuits
Once were his pleasure and chief aim, in vain
Doth use him to forgetfulness. These cross
The secret avenues of thought like ghosts,
Nor lose but with long years their power to chill
And haunt with memories of murdered self.
The sweet is bitter in remembrance, lost ;
Zeal but disquietude turned in ; and all
The happy hours flew erst on eager wing,
Though solitary, now mar solitude
And fill all leisure with a listlessness.
Ever do we abandon us to toil
Of faculties most general, while the gift
And personal endowment, long disused,
Wrapped in the napkins of unserious play,
Brings vain regret and unrest manifold.
'Twill not be ever thus. The one small gift,
The faculty revealed in early years
Unto the meanest in his bent : this test

And measure of ourselves shall be the mark
Of our utility ; and, fostered well,
Suffice to feed all natural desires
By winning them occasion to their end.

Strange that the knowledge we unite to praise
And hold for power, should be but the quest
Of immaturity : strange that the youth,
His feet firm on the threshold, should but glance
Down the unfolding vista, and withdraw !
That glance, how memorable ! Still he turns
To view the fading scene with wistful eye ;
Still he recalls, in unforgotten charm,
The foreground prospect, with its branching
paths,
Flower-bordered, that led onward to a maze
Wherein the eye plunged restfully : alight
With brilliant parterres ; and in deep shade,
Cool arbours of retirement where a lawn
Stole smoothly to a stream, and trees stood round
Conspiring to embosom from the glare
And outer noontide heats.—Here vision failed :
Further was hidden ; for all seemed the approach
And gradual enticement to some bourne
Sunk in the lap of distance. A soft haze
Bathed the remoter tracts ; yet Fancy fled
On to where uplands gathered to a point
High in the empyrean—the extreme verge
And portal of immensity, whence he
Who should have there adventured might behold,
Haply, the universe mapped at his feet :

Immeasurable realms suffused with light
Such as nor Fancy nor the prophets dreamed.

Thus unto youthful eyes the view appeared,
Inlaid with many a rich circumstance.
And thus unto our eyes it erst shone forth
Ere yet sobriety had darkened hope,
And we knew knowledge for a mixed delight :
An upward path indeed, not all devoid
Of flowers sown by the wayside amid weeds ;
Nor wanting arbours of retirement—lawns,
Smooth pleasaunces, and bending trees, and streams,
Where oft the traveller might pause awhile
From his steep toil and linger in the shade ;—
But perilous and rockbound on the heights :
Thwarted with clefts the fierce denuding storm
And the swift cataract had chiselled deep—
Sheer pitfalls for the unwary, to be scaled
But with slow caution and accustomed feet,
What time the vertical and tingling beams
Of the sun, pitiless, scorched eye and sense,
Thrown from the rock ; till weary of the glare
And pulsing ardour of the soil, he creeps
Into a shady nook, and casts him down
Upon a moss-grown floor—high overbrowed
By a cragged prominence, and breathes again.

And here, forgetful of the flying hours,
Content to contemplate the distance won,
Lulled by the murmur of the unseen rills
Pass tinkling under moss and stone, he lies.

O sweet Repose that followest the deed,
Source unadulterate, from whose crystal deep
The traveller, athirst, bowed o'er thy brink,
Gains knowledge of delight no purchase brings,
Nor birth nor power nor station may command !
He is a king who in the lap of ease
And plenty have been conquered with his strength,
Sits still a little while—a breathing space,
And truly learns the meaning of repose.
Let him give heed this salut^a/ory rest
And fond revision of the distance gained
Pass not their limit. Even as the draught
The traveller enjoys must lose full soon
Its lusciousness, his urgent need supplied :
So doth satiety defeat all ease
Hath not equivalence in labour borne,
Its counterpoise in action. Therefore—On !

What is this knowledge we unite to praise
And set upon a pedestal apart,
As not for use ? Hath it no hold on life,
No point of contact with the work-day deed ?
Whence cometh it : and to what end ? We say
A little knowledge is a useful thing :
More than enough will oft-times lead astray ;
Knowledge is power : but power in the excess
Makes overbold, breeds confidence in self
Beyond all warranty.—True living, then,
Is best assured where modesty withholds
Presumptuous man from seeking in the cause
A rule for his procedure, a firm base

For conduct shall be natural and right ?
Inexplicable dogma ! Is not knowing
Pre-requisite for doing ? Is not sense
The very needle of our course ? No act
But hath its precedent in reason—none.
Where shall we quit reason ? And how divorce
The mind from the quintessence of itself ?
Experience, Knowledge, Reason, have one theme :
Man's fixed relationship to outward things,
Which, in the measure that he learns it here,
Alone makes living possible and safe.
A truce to these old questionings ! They show
Men will walk blindfold on a path where eyes
And practised vision may not yet avail
To hinder from destruction. If some use
To seek retirement and there gather lore
But for the lore's sake and not present need,
And, through the means grow callous to the end,
Live as the worms do, feeding on decay :
Though thousands should put wisdom to abuse,
Shall we not hold it for a godlike thing,
Nor worshipping afar, pay in our homes
Such daily rite as faculty enjoins ?

Nor worshipping afar.—Hast thou not felt,
O thoughtful student in thy thoughtless home,—
Hast never felt how wondrously estranged
Far-off and isolate are all things of the mind
From men in general ? It seems a gulph
Well-nigh impassable lies stretched between.
We live, drink, eat, perform that which we must,

Going where pleasure or affection calls,
Upon the hither shore ; while there beyond,
Remote in a traditionary world,
Men speculate and poetise and think,
And the faint echo of their thought comes blown
In fitful murmur to our ears : the sound
Of a strange quality, like unknown tongues ;
The meaning hidden in fantastic garb
Of pedantry and scholarship revolts
The simple man, leaving him all unmoved.—
Hast never known the yearning to impart
This that was beautiful to one well loved—
Wife, friend, or mother—in whose feeling heart
'Twould find sure echo, and wake pleasure there
As common thought made vocal? Alas ! see
'Tis written for man learnèd, not for man.
Not all thy fervour and sincerity,
Nor all the pent emotion in thy voice
Could lend it life-blood. The too courtly dress,
The starch poetic and the mincing gait
Make it a far-off thing—fine company
And flattering, that leaves the heart estranged.
Yet haply for a moment when the verse,
Grown human and most simple and divine,
Breathes forth compassion from all fineness
purged—
The very soul made visible in words—
Ah then see how its eloquence will bring
The glitter to the eye ; and breathless, hushed,
Uplifted from himself, the listener turns
And with rapt eagerness drinks in the thought

Seems mirrored from his own—the self-same thing
He learnt from sorrow and had breathed to none,
Deeming it sacred, and too deep for speech.

These moments are divine. And they do lie
Untarnished in the memory through long years :
Brightly discernible as some fair spot
The parting traveller views from the steep,
Stretched out in the broad sunshine at his feet.
They are a bond draws into unity
Dissevered minds to show them of one piece :
One instrument waked by the skilful touch
To harmony. Ay, they are more than this ;
They are the earnest of a future day,
When poesy and all things of the mind,
Far-spreading like a growth, shall intertwine
With things of our own work-day life, and lending
Them a new grace, wider significance,
Endowing Nature with a deeper charm
For common minds, breed interest everywhere ;
Until this life, inscrutable so long,
Mysterious, perplexed, insoluble,
A wilderness of contraries, shall show
In wondrous unity : a thing informed
By a sole principle, obedient
Through countless forms to one pervasive law.
Conduct shall bend to the unerring test
Thereby established ; happiness consist
But in the furtherance of one prime end
Born of this principle. Disease and ills,
No longer arbitrary, shall be shown

The inevitable outcome of abuse :
All misery of ignorance. Our span
And tenure of this world—so short, so sad,
So insufficient to work out the ends
For which birth fashioned us, shall grow
With added ease unto its natural term,
And yield full satisfaction to desire.
Ever advancing, a new type shall spring
Forth from our lower race, endowed with powers
We cannot prophesy—Being Consummate ;
And fashioned to new offices, shall stand
Godlike upon the earth, with far-off trace
Of a dead ancestry inscribed upon
His perfect lineaments ; not less unlike
Our present mould his structure, than is ours
Unto some mammal of the fields ; his mind
Gifted in infancy with power transcends
The crowning vigour of our thoughtful years :
Our individual reasoning and its fruits
In him instinctive and made permanent ;
Expression his to use as it may serve,
And he a poet and philosopher
Unlearnedly, whose living book shall be
His sister's countenance, his brother's speech,
The lesson of the moment—each high truth
Made legible in action, and thus learnt
Doubly impressive. Then no enmity
Shall hinder the free flowing of the thought
In speech. Emotion shall crave utterance,
And find it in some melody of tones
Like to sweet music, that in our sad days

Doth seem the embodiment of all we feel
And never may give shape to in pale words.

O Music, in thy deep mysterious power,
More than in other things, I think to trace
Some argument of greatness in my kind
Whereof they are scarce conscious ! When I drink
Thy trembling harmonies, and am filled full
Even to the fibres of my being
With a strange ecstasy unknown, a joy
Having no cipher in my soul, nor vent
Save in dim reverence : O when I hear
The intelligible accents of thy tongue,
And say, This is my soul made audible,
The flower of my consciousness unclosed ;
And while I ponder and am dark, 'tis borne
In on me questioning, how this new tongue,
Vaguely significant as pristine speech,
Is even Man's handiwork—a structure vast,
Built up with the crude elements of sound,
Nowise indebted unto Nature's hand,
Standing as Man's body to the dull earth
Which is his element :—O then I learn
His potency—perfectibility—
The argument of greatness shall be his,
O Music, in thy mystery and power !

We shall not see it ; and this mortal frame,
Attuned to the intransitory, must grow cold,
Its life-long ardour toward higher things
Unsated and unquenched, save in decay !

And those strong ties that ever do suggest
With unquiet vividness more lasting bonds
Should gain in fulness as the years rolled on
Till they were perfect and organic : these,
In sundering, must leave the poor maimed heart
A shadow of itself, or but a fragment
Torn beyond mending that doth wither soon.—
There is no earthly sorrow may compare
With the sad sense of parting—'tis untold :
For to its last profundity, I ween,
None ever plunged him and returned to tell,
Nor singer nor yet seer. All that it means—
The thousand pallors of an altered life—
The soul gone out of Nature, with the light
Glowed upon little things—the slender facts
And fancies of the moment, that summed up
Do largely constitute our life :—all these
Bereft of their utility to mark
New progress in affection, to supply
The groundwork unto love that must needs cling
About the tangible, draw nourishment
From outward things mysteriously full
Of echoes and suggestions of itself :—
These daily sights and sounds, too, lose their soul
And are but symbols in an unknown tongue,
One dead monotony. Ah, well I know
The joy or sorrow that a simple tree
Holds for the gazer !—To the young how glad !—
How pure, sweet-smelling, and intensely green !
A murmurous expectancy thrills through
Its nodding leaves ; those arms that upward stretch

In healthful vigour to the morning sky,
Do typify youth's yearnings and desires,
Speaking of love-*tales* to be whispered low
Where sunbeams wreath the underwood and pause
Caught in the thicket-tops. To youth how glad,
How redolent of happy days to come !
But to the old how full of memories !—
Inseparable thoughts cling closely round
Each well-known figure of the spreading boughs.
Sadly it rustles : it is lorn and mute,
Through storm and change and the deep midnight
hush

Of moonless nights, through all the long-drawn days
Sitting in commune with itself alone,
Unnoticed and unvisited of men.
But chiefly it is sad in that it stands
Beautiful as of old, whilst we are changed,
And have no heart to glory in it more.
Or if it gladden us, the joy is calm,
Impersonal, the echo of past joy,
And nothing hopeful, but resigned and grave.—
If sundered ties and the dulled sense can work
Such lamentable change—O marvel not
Men say unto themselves, An this be true,
An all my dear ones shall be lost to me,
Dead through eternity, then Joy is dead,
And life not worth the living !

Such deep grief

Philosophy is powerless to assuage
Save in diverting it. For where fond hopes
Have long been entertained, and ardently,

Life is tinged through by them ; they are a part
Even of its substance, and the rent must bleed.
But for the young who, centreing their care
Upon this present life and this fair world,
Will lend their highest ardours to the task
Of bettering the condition of our race,
Each with his faculty, methinks there is,
Or should be, no such bitterness. What is
The bitterness of parting ? 'Tis a sense
Of joy half-tasted and too soon withdrawn,
Of bonds of mutual helpfulness dissolved
Ere yet they were established. But if these
Might work out their utility on earth
Then had continuance no plea. The cup
Wherefrom we drink is easily relinquished
When the draught is out ; but Love weeping clings
Unto the empty vessel of its joy,
Nor knows a reason why the draught should fail.
This is no mystery. 'Tis a wise law
Of Nature, who to further her great ends
Is lavish of her forces, doth endow
Each instinct with surfluity of strength,
Meeting all hazards : as for one tall tree
She willingly expends a thousand seeds.

How lovely is Affection—with its scorn
Of prudence and the dictates of cold sense !
Seeking no pleasure for itself, it lives
But for the object of its love, whose will
Is law, whose gentleness is heaven, whose being—
Though 'twere malevolence made flesh, and sin

Impersonate—is yet more wildly dear
Than veriest perfection. How it clings,
And presses its soft bosom to the thorn
In a rapt stillness of content ! How great,
Even to the mocker, is this strength of Love :
How changeless, and how lovely in its strength !
There is no lovely thing hath not its use.
The passions we deem beautiful are those
Which are the essence of our life—its root
And principle—the source of being—the frame
Upon whose stableness all shifting forms
Of our vitality—our deeds and thoughts,
Hang like a gossamer the winds of time
Sweep utterly away. They are of earth ;
Their every implication hath a bearing
Upon earthly things—the ends and aims of life ;
And in their origin and destiny
Do serve one principle—Man's furtherance,
Through mutual benefit and mutual care.
We deem love beautiful, whose beauty lies
In our sole knowledge of its fostering power,
Its kind prevention of the hurtful act,
Its care in sickness, its protecting zeal,
Its worship of the author of its joy.
Nor is Love's beauty less in that the world
Claims all her operancy for its own.

O simple hearts : ye whom a childlike faith,
Early instilled, is of the web and woof
Of your imaginings : O ye whose souls
Hold in abhorrence the unaided thought

Of men all uninspired, presumptuous :
Ye for whom purity and rectitude
Exist not save as married to your creed ;
Who link in fancy the unfettered thought
With evil living and unbridled lust :
Ye for whom Reason is the snare of Hell,
A pitfall for the gifted, and the curse
Even of our century : whom knowledge moves
To loathing and contempt, there where it bursts
The age-long fetters of the stunted soul
Bidding it wander in new liberty :—
O pause . . . and give me ear in gentler mood !
Presume not to condemn these brother men
Who in all singleness of heart proclaim
Truth as they find it, as it doth appear
Unto their earnestly interrogating minds.
What though 'twere fallacy : will time not shew
The undying Truth again, and rend these veils
From her fair face ? Doubt not 'twill e'en be so,
And doubting not, abandon the vain wish
(O grave futility !) to stunt the growth
Of the tree knowledge, that despite all checks
Will lift the stone and penetrate the wall
Handsbreath by handsbreath. Ay, it shall grow on
To destined stature, showering its fruits,
Dealing wide ruin to whate'er withstands.
O wherefore should it not ! 'Tis natural,
Resistless, a prime mover in the world.
Ye are as frenzied men would set their teeth
And beat about a tree-trunk with clenched fists,
Holding it shameful for a tree to grow !

Ye are as mariners on storm-swept seas,—
Hurled through a narrow strait choked up with reefs
And boiling with curled surges, who should throw
Their chart and compass to the winds when most
These constant guides were vital to their needs.—
Throw Reason to the winds in Doubt's dark hour,
When skies are blackening and awful Fate
Stoops like a storm-fiend from the cracking pall,—
When life and beauty and dear home fade out
From memory narrowed to the last fell crash
Of elements rebounding :—hurl the chart
Far out into the blinding mist—shut eyes—
Fold arms—crouch low,—and at the thunder-split
Of sundering wreckage—glory in the deed !

It lies not in our power to shape the course
Of circumstance. If we ourselves form part
Of the grand impulse of events (we live,
And our vitality helps swell the tide
Of total force), yet are we but the seat
Of power spent in our fashioning—the sum
Of energies inherited, the line
Resultant of all influence hath forged
Into our consciousness and found hold there.
Our thoughts are not our own : they are the fruit
Of seed sown in a ready soil by winds
From all the changeful heaven. Our will is even
The outcome of experience, of desires
Bred by our survey of the world : the bias
Of power external or innate doth prompt
Each deed and impulse of the hour, and throw

A light of preference on the doubtful path.
Seeing this is, deem not these questionings
Of all that ye hold sacred a chance birth—
The idle spawn of pride of intellect.
Such obloquy seems but the mask of fear,
Nor longer may avail. Man hath put off
His childish state : his growing powers of mind
Brook no denial of their altered needs.

We shall not see perfection. Ah, turn not
With a cold eye, with bitter, scornful heart
To the fond dream again, but rather rise,
Saddened it may be, but resolved to front
The unwelcome tidings with a hero's calm.
Are we not brothers—we who yearn and strive
For some poor share of happiness, who long
For the assurance of reward at last
For so long hoping and long suffering here ?
Must we be sundered by unmanly strife
Who are so wondrously akin—who know
Like needs, like aspirations and like fears ;
Whose undistinguishable woes are such
That one is but the echo of the other
And leaves the same dull misery behind ?
Our fates are interwoven. We now stand
Upon the brink of a discovery
At which e'en Sorrow shall grow pale, and Pride,
Fallen from the immeasurable altitudes
Of her aspiring, lie an-humbled in the dust.
Desire, freed from captivity, shall reel
On to destruction with lewd ravening eyes

And boundless appetite—as one long pent
Within the confines of a dungeon, reels
In the free air of heaven and knows no law
Not visible in walls and bolts and bars.
Sin shall have triumph, her vain terrors past ;
And waking from a troubled dream, the fool
Shall yield him to his impulse with the cry—
“Come, eat, drink, and be merry, for the morn
We perish and are gone like summer leaves.”
Yet cometh soon the day when Nature’s voice,
Grown strident in the din, shall strike men dumb
Like clarions of fate blown in the sky,
Stilling them with amaze. Then shall the bolts
Forged by the essence of all things be seen,
Long time invisible or clean forgot :
The eternal barrier’s elastic bounds
Shall spring back with a vehement recoil
And Trespass shall prove Folly in a mask,
Excess, Self-Detriment. In that far day
The hests of Duty shall be clear proclaimed
By Science in unalterable laws—
Firm as the adamant—nay firmer far,
As suffering no change, for Time himself
Worketh obedient to their rule. The face
Of Duty shall be other than we know :
Full many things deemed evil shall appear
The struggling forms of embryonic good—
Choked workings of a law not manifest
To this dark age. Full many things deemed good
And worthy of high honour—and deep blame
In the light losing—shall be stripped of all

The witchcraft of tradition, to be guaged
By sole test of effect in altered case.
But the bright heritage of mingled truth
Slow wrested upon foughten fields of old,
The pith and marrow of all creeds, the rock
Steadfast in a drear turbulence of waves
And winds of superstition, the pure source
Of every virtue sung beneath the sun—
The deep foundation of all thoughts of right,
Of justice, charity, true kindness, love,
Sweet mercy, fortitude, and helpful zeal,
Of widening tolerance and sympathy,
Of eager recognition of laws based
On reason and right reading of what is :—
This cannot die ; 'twill even be the root
Whence shall arise a stately moral code—
Fair tree marred by no winds of fantasy
Born of the individual mind, unmarred
By fruits empirical and poisonous—
Conceits and visions of men highly wrought,
The self-made mouthpiece of divinity.
New vigilance shall prune it : a calm eye
Versed in the secrets of all growth, a hand
Unerringly directed, shall attend
Each later shoot, armed with a single test
Infallible—no logic, but known law.

Were this the vision of an idle muse,
The brightly coloured texture of a dream,
The fond aspiring of a dim desire,
The unreasoned forecast of a heated mood—

Sweet Fancy's child dight in poetic garb,
Strayed into realms of faery uncontrolled :
And not the rigid argument from truth
Even now vouchsafed us—the full complement
Of known beginnings, the perspective point
Of lines convergent—the bone's structure built—
The arc full circled, and the pattern wrought—
I'd pluck out the vain page and sing for babes !
A greater than my hand is here. The voice
Even of our century hath filled the ears
Of one of the least worthy of her sons,
Who with what eloquence is poorly his
Breathes forth an echo of the fateful sound,
Far off and in faint dissonance,—yet charged
With full sincerity ne'er lacked a tone
To arrest the unwilling ear : armed with a sense
Of covert sympathy for who but shapes
The deep conviction of unnumbered hearts—
The common secret of all open minds !

Now—as I gaze back on the distance won,
What dull misgivings are my own ! How poor,
Weak, and unworthy of the task my verse !
How all inadequate to paint the thoughts
Fled vested in fair images of truth—
Most reasonably dight—athwart the scene
Lay spread out like a garden to my view
Man's pilgrimage to truth—such was the theme !
And he a wanderer led by the pale
And anxious travails of the young day
To sound of wakening birds—the twitching stir

Of live things in the forest gloom, 'mid scents
Of leaves and tendrils that unbend from sleep—
Half conscious of the Morn that, with slow hand
Of doubtful augury, touched leaf and stem
With silver gray, and glided through the wood.
The day dawned. The immeasurable plain
Burst into blossom ; the pale distance warmed
With mazy flower-plots and bright trees, and
streams

Path-bordered where cool arbours of retirement
Did beckon to the traveller by the way.

The dwindled hills rose in the lap of space :

Blue distance charmed—invited to be gone

Unto her sunny slopes ; the steepening way

Glowed with fierce ardours, and fell Solitude

Struck terror to the lonely pilgrim's heart.

Ever ascending, see him thrid the glooms

Of lofty valleys whose o'ershading peaks

Loom in the vastness of their height revealed,

With scarped sides inaccessible—yet bound

With edging of the zigzag path. Steep toil !

And never a voice to cheer him but the croak,

Harsh and monotonous, of warning bird.

Behold him mounting ! He is lost to view—

Severed from sympathy—foolhardy—mad !

Yet wait. There !—see him beckoning on the crag :

What sees he that illumines his visage so ?—

The broad lands of Futurity in sight !

An universe of joy mapped at his feet,

Where after wandering he shall find rest

In toils of maintenance and powers well used.

Ye weary ones still plodding on the steep,
O never faint, though weary be the way :
Though long the way, long distance hath been won,
And ye are heirs of distance won for you !
The secret of content is to enjoy
The earnest of the future in our midst,
The bright beginnings and the early fruits
Hang furtive in this wilderness of weeds.
The secret of content is to employ
All powers of mind and body—all we can ;
To stifle in an atmosphere of deeds
The vain prophetic yearnings of the soul.
The secret of content is to be wise—
Versed in the laws of Nature and the rules
She giveth for our guidance—we are lost,
Cast utterly away, so we but swerve
One handbreadth from the path which she illumines.
It is to sow the seed in early years
Shall bear the fitting harvest for our prime :
To know that in all knowledge power lies,
In ignorance the root of all our harm :—
Aye to remember that, 'mid shifting sands,
WORK, LOVE, and DUTY are the rocks of ease !

A Voice from the Sanctuary.

“How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invoke;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.

If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.”

—SHAKESPEARE : *Sonnet xxxviii.*

SLEEP thou !
Nor waken at the touch, O Love,
Of my fond-dwelling lips
Do lightly linger on thy neck's young snow.
I watch above !
All tranquilly upheave thy breath
So that I know
How the pure spirit that doth sleep beneath
Those soft-fringed lids
Resteth content in beautifulest trust ;
Or if thou must
Ope thine eyes heavily awhile,
O smile,
And turn, and veil them swift again,
Leaving me muse upon the azure stain
Tinct on my vision by their soft clear deeps. . .
She sleeps !

O fair young cheek
Cinctured with pale pencillings of softest down :
O rippling hair
That the dim taper tips
With a burnt gold there where it steals to seek
A dwelling-place, and like a crown
Circles one little shoulder, coyly fair,
That beckons to my lips ! . . .

Now thou art tranquil, and a slumber deep
Hath bound thy gentleness with a suave tie :
Thou'rt far from me—yet know I that in sleep,
Through all the intertexture of thy dreams,
I (though unworthy) am still present—aye !
That thoughts of me flow on like hidden streams
Through the sweet country where thou wanderest :
And thou, like to a traveller whose course
Is married to a streamlet's, listenest
For the old music that thine ear loves so—
'Mid all vicissitudes an underflow
And mild pervasive force . . .

How am I blest in that thou'rt wholly mine !
A harp for my sole touching—a sweet flute
Shapes common air to melodies not mine :
A costly product, fashioned like a fruit
By sun and wind of circumstance consenting,
Brought to peach-fairness—thine own mellow grace—
By happiest conjunction in quiet place,
Safe shelter of a vicinage preventing
All bitter winds

From gaining thee untempered—that so thou,
 Ripe for the plucking of who finds,
 Look perfect from thy bough,
 And yielding faint hold at the touch of love,
 Fall willing from thy tenement above. . . .

How if a harm assail thee ! Would I rise,
 All vigour of my manhood knit in cords ?
 All fires of will lit in my flaming eyes ?
 All brief stern menace in my words ?
 Ah, do believe it ! Though in peaceful wise
 While life smiles I lie supine at thy feet,
 Believe that I (whose very life thou art)
 Would lightly give my life for thee
 Since thou gav'st me thy heart !
 Or better—that I dearly prize
 My life—thy best security,
 Thy love's unworthy seat,
 And would preserve it at all costs, were need,
 Were doing of the fateful deed
 An injury to thee.
 Aye, and dishonour's self I'd brook
 So I might still read in thy look
 That thou still honour'dst me ! . . .

Thou art a symbol in mine eyes
 Of things I never felt—
 Yet early knew when at the knees
 Of my mother I had knelt,
 And rose in the deep stilly night
 By the candle's steady flame

To lay me in my cool white bed
And ponder in a drowsy head
The opening of a dream.—
Thou art a symbol of delight
Fled onward from my dreaming grasp
In fancifuller years—
The prize melts from the waking clasp
And draws brief tears :
The woman of the many shapes
That beckons ever, and escapes—
Dawns sunnily in this sweet smile,
Stays maddening a little while,
Fades in a dreary murk of guile,
Sets far beyond hope's golden isle,
And leaves dead shapes.

Nay, thou art more than these imaginable things—
Thou art thyself, and the dear parts of thee strange strings
To Fancy's harp . . .

O pity that old Time should touch this cheek
And mar with sorrow's tracery thing so divine !
What is my strength of love—how am I weak !
In that no effort of my will—no deed of mine
Can e'er avail me to withstand such foe.
Ah, give me patience ! I will borrow arts
From never-ending love to keep young hearts,
Young faces, and young fancies ever young.
I will address me to unsleeping cares ;
Unintermittently will I among
Life's hidden pitfalls and unnumbered snares
Pace wide-eyed and uphold thee with my arms.

For I do love thee so,
 Each hour shall be made beautiful for thee,
 My love assisting. I will outrun thought
 To meet the shadow of thy unbreathèd wish :
 I will annihilate far-off alarms
 Of danger and disquiet ere they grow—
 They shall all culminate and spend their force in me,
 Choked at our threshold by grip devilish
 As is their own. Then, the mute battle fought,
 I will return to thee ! Thy calm unruffled brow,
 Thine eyes fresh as the morning and undimmed,
 Thy immaculate cheek, the glory of thy hair,
 The unclouded sunniness of thy soft voice—
 All that is in thee of supremely fair,
 Shall be my utmost guerdon : and my prowess hymned
 By these suave harmonies I shall anew rejoice !

Start never in thy slumber, dear !
 What peril haunts thy dreaming brain ?
 'Tis I watch o'er thee—I am near :
 Sleep peacefully again ! . . .

For me hath Time with unreposing hand
 Made ripe this sunny fruit : for me the years
 Have poured their lavish urns' unfailing store
 Of richness at my feet, bidding me take.
 For me this tenement, conceived and planned,
 Given unto me to hold for evermore,
 Was made thus perfect—with its smiles and tears
 At bidding of my will : and I to mould and make
 The yielding structure unto destined ends.

For me the fulness of thine unbound hair,
For me the graces of a form that lends
To its every movement something more than rare
As being personal and native to one soul . . .
That Soul for me—whose girlish innocence
Conjoins with woman's wisdom and sweet sense ;
Whose virtues are reproofs to me—whose springs
Of tenderness and feeling are as wings
To feeling and to tenderness in me ;
Whose very faults, grown wildly dear,
Seem better than perfection here,
And, rebels for my kind control,
Still are most womanly. . . .

Looking within myself I find no merit there
Could bid me hope such treasure to deserve ;
Bared are my weaknesses—my faults confessed,
Now in this private hour when no cloaks serve.
Ah, wherefore art thou blinded by false air
Of outward seemliness ! I am but dressed
In the pure radiance of thine own white light
Rayed hopefully abroad. O I am night
Robbed of thy loving trust ! No hero I,
But a most frail and pitiable thrall—
Prey to each circumstance, bowed down beneath the weight
And impact of immitigable force
Doth press me earthward and sore mutilate
The wholeness of my striving and resource.
Yet when thou'rt by me—ah ! when thou art by,
Then am I all myself—nay, more than all,

- For thy dear confidence I never dare betray :
 What thou would'st have me do, do I each day,
 As thou wilt have me think, think I, and say ;
 Proud of thy worship I grow worthier thee :
 O teach me, Dear, thy fitting mate to be ! . . .

Just is thy confidence. His words and deeds
 Were never man's full measure, who infolds
 Full many a germ o'ershaded by ill weeds
 And buried in a hard soil out of sight :
 Where never winds may pierce to them, nor light
 Of kindling suns nor moisture of quick dews
 Conspire to awaken from enduring trance.
 What though occasion never warm, and shade
 Of circumstance heaven's living light refuse ?—
 The germs are there—they crave but a kind glance,
 Direct strong speech of sympathy that moulds
 Indefinite desire to firm resolve.
 True woman's love is lavish of such cares :
 Full many a golden harvest long delayed
 Points to her workmanship, who gently dares,
 And hath an alchemy rude surface to dissolve.
 E'en thus thy love did quicken germs in me
 Else had been dull and cold eternally. . . .

How we o'erreach ourselves—who sternly veil
 Our every emotion, our kind thoughts, and all
 The endearing impulses of the quick soul,
 Fearing the misconstruction ! For thus fail
 The springs of mutual benefit ; just ills befall
 The man cold in his brotherhood. How whole

And lightsome our imaginings might be, could dread
Of early limits to the just desire,
The natural free outcome of the will,
The needs imperative, the appetites
Of innate faculties (too thinly fed,
Yet wanting food, consuming with cruel fire)
Be banished and shown groundless and made still
So might it be : and such day-long delights
As mark our communing, dear Love, enhance
Man's heavy atmosphere, could each but bend—

One to the other—as we do :

Finding his proper pleasure in the glance
Of gratitude, and reaping from his friend
The equal harvest of his rightful due . . .
Daily I tread with thee life's beaten way,
And watch and mark where thou most needest me—
How I may serve thee and use strength for thee,
For art thou not my comrade and sweet stay—
The source of my best happiness—the key
Of mine own treasure-chest, which an I lose,
Or spoil, or suffer to be wrenched from me,
Shall fate not all her dearest boons refuse ? . . .
Herein doth lie a truth. There is no bond
Save one of mutual benefit : true love,
Aye, and true friendship and each meaner tie,
Rest indissolubly on lasting use—
New service interchanged, makes the heart fond
With helpful gratitude—kind thoughts remove
The enormous barrier 'twixt soul and soul
And blend their parts to one confederate whole.
Thus in thy love I taste futurity
Shall bind all men through use to unity. . . .

And this is love !—this disembodied tenderness,
This rapt eye-worship of thy form's soft slenderness
And subtle spells of movement and repose.
Soul leans on vision to behold thy sweetness
And eye grows soul to view it in completeness
Thou prospect and thou problem for both those.
And they grow one though differing—twin sides
O' the shield perception, and one twined thought.

Ah, I remember the dull hours I sought
To upbuild with fancy on a quaking ground
The unseen loveliness lives and abides
All ruining storm. Rich-coloured lights I found
Gleaming in a marsh : with these I wove a dream
Of sunset tints glassed in a quiet stream.
I gathered wild flowers where they grew 'mid thorns
And noisome prodigies of lurid hue,
Setting them in the garden of my thought,
Viewing them in the light of summer morns
Far from the tangled forest where they grew.
Some hated weeds I took, and thence withdrew
Virtues medicinal ; full soon I saw
No growth was hateful—the empoisoned soil,
The fell confederacy of yearlong shade
With unevaporating damps still made
Pestilence natural. By lonely toil
Some little space I cleared, learning the law :
Whoso hates evil shall cut through the root,
Change the soil's quality, not prune the shoot.
I laboured thus till a slant ray of light

Fell in upon the tangle ; the damps dried,—
The dank luxuriance grew dwarfed, then died ;
Sweet odours reigned and the greensward was dight
With flowers of the sun—heaven's progeny,
But few and scattered. I could do no more,
And my own garden was neglected. Soon
The boughs met overhead, and the dense roof
Upcurtained the warm sunlight from the floor :
The balmy winds sang drearily aloof,
And the huge fungus oozed up as before,
Slimy and sudden. My poor flowers paled,
Sickened and hung drooping—denied the boon
Of their lord's countenance. My labours failed ;
But one frail blossom I bore home with me . . .
And still my garden lacked. I could not choose
But see these wild flowers were half phantasy—
Bright by the contrast of their natal glooms.
I longed then for the visionary blooms
Of poesy : but no clime might supply them,
Nor longing realise, nor money buy them.
So life grew dark. At length upon a day
A creamy blossom hung athwart my way,
And not too high for reaching. It seemed homely,
Yet sweet as the young Dawn when with pale arms
She wreathes the forehead of her father Night
And dissipates a tempest of alarms
With tip-toe kiss. And ever it grew lovely,
And ever found fresh favour in my sight.
One truth I learned : there is a hue exceeds
All hues of poesy in the one sweet rose
We wear and call our own. Not faery meads

Dight with the firstlings of the young-eyed muse
Show any charm so intimately dear.

Thou art my wild-rose, and I wear thee here. . . .

Without, the night-wind grieves,

Within 'tis warm and still :

Lightly brushing o'er the sill

Hear'st the tapping leaves ?

The taper dwindles to its death—

O cradle me with thy heaving breath

. . . . Where I lie still ! . . .

How will the morn look, Love, when we awaken—
Heavy-eyed as oft of old, dreary and forsaken ?

No ! thrilling to a love-song

Echoing the woods among :

Golden-haired and azure-lidded,

With many a vein of fancy thridded :

Clear-eyed, with a happy look,

Tuneful as a water-brook—

She will flutter at our casement

And go stealing round the basement,

Prying into nooks and niches—

Filling them with sunny riches,

Gliding on the garden-hedges,

Spiriting their sullen edges,—

Footing it along !

Down the alley she'll come dancing,

Dallying and then advancing,

Dropping little golden kisses

In at all dark orifices,

Jewelling the caves of myrtle

With the sheen shed from her kirtle,
 Shooting into damp recesses
 Arrow-light that effervesces,
 Fingering the hyacinths
 Till they glow like amaranths,—
 Footing it along !

Tripping into wannish tangles
 Where the taper ivy dangles,
 Looking for forgotten angles
 Where to hang her faery spangles,
 Kissing little dewy rillets
 That go warbling under fillets
 Of lush grasses and soft mosses
 All aglow with summer glosses,—
 Footing it along !

Now she travels on the greensward,
 Chasing the long shadows eastward ;
 Wading knee-deep in the flower-beds,
 Tilts up all the sleepy heads.
 Climbs she to the silent eaves,
 Peeping through the screen of leaves,
 Hearken to the startled chatter !
 Ruffled feathers bead with eyes :
What's the matter ! What's the matter !—
 Shrilly trillets of surprise.
 Listen to the echoing chorus :—
 Day is sweet and all before us,
 Green and golden is the woodland,
 Bright the snowy isles of cloudland—
 Hearken, and rejoice !
 Now she comes with prying fingers,

Slyly at our casement lingers,
 Nestling broadly on the sill—
 Looking for a chink to spill
 Her steady eye-beams on the floor,
 That growing bolder evermore,
 Travel up to wall and ceiling,
 Lustre opalline annealing
 From the curtained window-pane,
 Touching last my own sweet flower,
 Deep in her sequestered bower,
 Wreathing her about with glory
 Like a saint in stained story
 High-embayed in minster fane ! . . .

So will the morn look—fair as the first morn :
 For through thy love I look with a child's eyes—
 A child's young eagerness, and am new born :
 Was schooled to ignorance—am simply wise. . . .
 O guard and keep me from the unseeing mood. . . .
 O stay the film ! . . . Divest me of the hard
 Smooth armour of the world wherein I warred—
 Fell wounded at thy feet O keep me young
 And gentle as thou art . . . thou dear and good
 Fair angel and sweet friend Teach me to be
 Like thee. . . .
 O stay a little while till I reach thee !

* * * * *

To Poesy.

SONNETS.

I.

IF thou but wilt to woo me as before
With private glance and undiscovered sign—
Ah, how I will attend thee ! and resign
My whole self to thy service evermore ;
For I am thine (I feel) to my heart's core,
There lives none loves thee with love deep as
mine :

I have long worshipped thee—my youth was thine
And all its years but added richer store
And riper of devotion to thy soul—
Thy enchanting form—the spell of thy linked
words,
Seem never words, but notes build foreign chords
Of unknown harmony—one blended whole,
Whose parts, being each familiar in his place,
Employed by thee, wear unfamiliar grace.

II.

AH how I worshipped thee !—what tuneful hours
Of summer days filled full of gladsome scent
And hot breath of the pastures—a blue tent,
A domed pavilion carpeted with flowers,
Or giant growths of the woodland, where fresh
showers

Humidly linger in dank prison pent,
And the fierce sun above finds not one vent
In all the matted tangle : where the powers
Of destiny gaze with a kindlier glance
Athwart green corridors and cease to wound :
Where all is tempered—air, and light, and sound,
And a rapt heaviness cloaks the slow advance :
Where'er wild Nature reigns how I have sued
thee—
How waylaid thee, and passionately wooed thee !

III.

How I have wooed thee in the sun-bathed fields—
The warm sweet corners 'neath the broad hedge-row,
Where shadows flit, and loud bees come and go,
Drowsing the stillness : where the gilded wealds
Lie far away in morning's level glow,
And not a sound but some suave symptom yields
Of wide tranquillity—the tinkling flow
Of rillets in the lush grass—airs that blow
And travel fleetly on the billowed grain.
When life lay all before and hope was young
How I have wooed thee in the winding lane
Hung o'er with trailing riches—plunging deep
Into a mottled shade where stray beams sleep :
How I have wooed thee and thy praises sung !

IV.

AND it was mine to meet thee on the peaks :
The desert air seemed thrilling to thy song ;
Mine, mine to wander the cold hills among—

The silent hollows where the tarn-wave breaks
 Sullen—oppressive, languorous along
 The bouldered promontory—echoing breaks,
 Filling the sad shore with a whispering throng
 Of outworn memories of ancient wrong.
 'Twas mine to meet thee in the buried gorge
 Where sense grew all an ear, and lashing spume
 Flew out upon the drenched rocks—flecked the
 gloom
 Of convulsed pools went writhing in a round
 To sink beneath black ledges and to forge
 With awful vehemence far underground !

V.

AND then to seek thee in the open meads
 Where streams flow sunnily 'mid peaceful green
 And the whole universe lies steeped in sheen !
 To go and spy thee in the water weeds
 Whose long dark tresses each slow ripple spreads :
 To bend where'er thy countenance is seen
 Looking up archly in a frame between
 Velvety shadows, with their transverse threads
 And eyes of dazzlement on glassy reach :
 Where rides the lily, and a silver gleam
 Of fish half seen goes flashing in the stream :
 Where bare roots straggle on a dry white beach
 And rushes babble in a noontide dream—
 There have I seen thee lie, didst thy fair tresses
 pleach.

VI.

So have I hailed thee on the crested ocean
When winds blew free over the riding waves :
Whistled the storm, I laughed at its commotion
And flew with it to apprise the sounding caves—
Where with a crash and a careering motion
The billow leaps and bursts and stuns and raves,
To die at last in wild sobs of emotion
On sanded floor its agony engraves.
Or pacing lonely on an endless strand
When high seas thundered in a day-long din,
'Mid the loud despair of blasts that come and go
O I have heard a mighty and a grand—
A drear dirge of eternity within
The roar and rattle of the undertow !

VII.

BUT thou art over all : there is no place
Hath not a look of thee—some far-off shine—
Some afterglow of radiance all thine,
Or tender dawn of slow-prevailing grace
Shall cleave our darkness and its shades efface.
Thou'rt never dead ! Eternal and divine
Sweet chantress of the sorrows of our line,
Still shalt thou celebrate man's too hard case.
Hope's singing voice, kind healer of dull moods,
Mouthpiece of aspirants—wide gate of dreams,
Interpreter of waters and of woods,
True sunlight of the mind—thy quenchless beams
Shall make our day and night who live in thee,
Our summer and our winter still continually !

Greeting at Dawn.

LONELY Beauty, ere thou wakest,
Ere thy maiden couch forsakest,
Let me sing to thee above,
And with soft numbers
Soothe thy slumbers
To fond meditative dreams of love !

O hark ! New melody awakens in the woods :
The earliest thrush
Trolls forth a fragmentary song ;
A rosy flush
Climbs in the fibres of the sky, and melts among
The desolate gray floods ;
O'er all the landscape wide
Pours an immeasurable and rolling tide
Of life and light and sound
And waking harmony !
The heights resound
With a far morning bleat of lambs ;
The farm-yard dog
Uplifts a melancholy plaint to the great Sun,
Who, like a monarch with a crown of flames,
Rears his broad forehead from the mists that clog
And brood upon the scintillating waste between,—
Till they dissolve in sheen
And tremble in the light of a new day begun.

And now faint odours
Of moist grass and dew-refreshed flowers arise
And cast them on the bosom of the wind that pours
Impetuously past to fret the trees among
 With liquid sighs ;
The broad gold beams of day are flung
With radiating sweep into sheer heaven,
 And topping the tall steeps
Begin to foot it swiftly down the side,
Waking each living creature as they glide,
Plunging into the umbrageous deeps
Where the moist fern all redolently sleeps,
And the shy hyacinths, within their wood retreat,
Carpet the dark floor, and keep it ever sweet.

Come let us forth and taste the dawn
Ere yet it gather into perfect day,—
Ere yet the virgin sweets of morn
Are sipped and spent—O let us haste away !

Lonely lady, an thou'rt waking,
An thy maiden couch forsaking,
Hear, O hear me from above !
All that my numbers
Told thy slumbers—
All is one image of awakening love.

Thus dawned thy beauty upon me when, steeped in night,
My spirit woke to the enchantment of thy voice :
From out a lethargy like death

It called me, and behold!—the earth lay bathed in light,
And every living thing began rejoice
That it drew breath ;
At thy light touch the brooding mist,
Veiling my universe, dissolved in sheen,
And the gray waters of despondency were kisst
By rosy hues soft mantling in between ;
Each darkened corner of my soul
Woke to thy radiance ; the fair altitudes of hope
And high endeavour—late so pale and wan !—
Caught a new gilding, and the day-beams stole
With lightsome footstep down each beckoning slope—
Waking live aspirations as they ran.

O great New Birth !
O Potency that dost invest the Earth
With more than her lost youth
And grace and truth—
Thy name is Love !

I see her coming o'er the sward—
My heart beats high—I turn toward
My East—and cannot speak ! . . .
O love—my love ! at last—at last !
The night indeed is overpast—
'Tis morn upon thy cheek !
The dew is in thine eyes—the sun
Shines through thy glances—Now for us
Is a new day begun !

Commune at Dusk.

COME let us forth into the air :
'Tis warm and summer-soft,
And for a while go linger there
Where we have lingered oft,—

The lowly arch that spans the stream,
Just at the village head,
Where Evening Ease comes out to dream
And think upon its Dead.

The Dead are in the churchyard there :
A presence to the mind,
A spirit that informs the air—
Austere, yet not unkind.

Under the churchyard wall the stream
Steals gurgling in its bed :
Not loud enough to break a dream
Nor banish the near Dead.

Its flow is a quiet evening sound :
Its bosom a dark glass,
With shadows of the trees edged round
And hanging tufts of grass.

A glimmer of the sky between
Lies broken on its breast :
A radiance of rosy sheen
Caught from the paling West.

While, from the meadow near at hand,
Come wafted to the pool
The ringing voices of a band
Of children from the school.

How with a deep intensity
Their voices mark the calm,
The silence of Immensity
Shut down on hill and farm !

We do not care to talk, old friend :
Our sympathy is mute ;
No common phrases serve our end,
Who leave unripened fruit.

We are at one to feel and share
The influence of the hour,—
To dwell upon the thoughts that are
The perfume of its flower.

We gaze out o'er the quiet flood,
Conscious of kindred minds ;—
The breeze is in the darkling wood,
The stream more drearily winds—

The flush has faded from its cheek—
'Tis gone ; and in its room
Hovers a chill and pallid streak—
A patch upon the gloom.

There are no words may well express
The fabric that the mind
Erects upon such loveliness,
Adding to what we find,

An element of what we know—
Have powerfully felt :
Swift harmonies that come and go,
Presentiments that melt

And quickly merge in common thought,
Leaving no clue to find
The meaning that is dimly sought
With yearning by the mind.

Suggestions there are given us
Of what we never knew—
Nor saw,—yet which hath driven us
To seek it aye anew :

An unity in consonance
With unity we find,—
Illimitable furtherance
Of what is but designed.

The germ enfolds the spreading tree :
In it perfection lies ;
It shoots with a vague ecstasy
Of longing for the skies.

We, too,—the germs of excellence,
Of virtue without leaven,—
Quickened by a prophetic sense,
Reach longingly to heaven.

My friend, we often have discussed
The fruits of this sweet time ;
The mind reverts to them—and must :
They breathe a sunnier clime.

They seem embodied in a form,
A human shape unseen,
A presence that is living-warm,
That beckons in between

The dusky pillars of the wood,
And paces by the stream :
Whispering promises of good—
Too reasoned for a dream.

But see the children trooping home :
They pass along the bridge ;
And some are racing still, and some
Point gaily to the ridge,

The topmost rim of all the dale,
That, silvered by the Moon,
Starts out of slumber, and will pale
Before her rising soon.

Thus, as we take our homeward way,
The eye, dismissed from earth,
Is flattered by a masque of day—
A pageant of its birth,

A faery semblance of the dawn,
Unreal and fanciful :
With hues that echo hues of morn
Afar,—yet beautiful ;

While the tall tapers of the stars,
Like candles on a shrine,
Faint wanly in the bright that wars
With their ethereal shine.

And, when at length we reach the gate
And wend along the walk,
The cheerful lamp proclaims it late :
We enter in and talk.

We touch upon a hundred things
Too delicate for day :
Exotics of the hour that brings
The eloquence to say,—

That liberates the impulse pent
In the indurated heart,
And bids each yield him to his bent,
Nor longer act a part.

Sweet communings ! Eventful strife !
O memorable hours !
Ye were the very bloom of Life—
Its transitory flowers.

A Vision of the Afterglow.

THE SUN had dropped into the burning west,
And I remember that the village folk
Stood gazing in the roads up to the crest
Of the dark amphitheatre that woke
To the dream splendours of the afterglow
Through all its crags. And as I lingered too,
In the soft air of evening, I beheld
A spectacle that stains my vision now
With a rich harmony of hues—undimmed
By after-sights, unique, unparalleled
By aught in memory or ever limned
Or fancifully wrought upon the true.
Ah, 'twas the heaven with its melting forms
And transitory images first taught
Man's ready eye, in sunsets and in storms,
To see and register the hints it caught
Of a creation fairer than we know :—
Dream architecture of piled domes of snow,
Isles in a summer sea of molten gold,
Rivers and plains, dark citadels that frown
From hoary summits where the clouds roll down
In measureless cascades and find no hold,
And cities gleaming on the silver strand

Of azure lakes in some far Wonderland !
Poet, confess thy fantasies the birth
Of these incomparable shows of earth.

The actual hills had darkened to a rim
Of foreground rocks low jutting on the brim
Of an immeasurable flood—sun kisst,
Far stretching to a shore where, in blue mist
Of distance wrapped, uprose a chain of peaks
That dwarfed earth's mountains to the merest
 mounds,—
Fantastically broken into freaks
Of airy masonry and moulded rounds
Of everlasting snow—dead white, faint rose,
Soft dreaming in the fire of sunset glows.
The body of the mountain lay in gloom
Impenetrable, undefined, save where
One golden cloudlet, poised above the spume
Of the blue laughing lake, lit up the bare
And rigid outline of a headland cape
That pushed out shelving, an empurpled shape
Mysterious and vast, into the deep—
Whose horses of white foam were caught and held
In a wide fretting ring about the steep.
All else was shadow ; the elusive shore,
Carved into bay and inlet, was beheld
With the uncertainty that fires the more
Man's shaping fancy to fulfil the void,
And image all pale distance hath destroyed.
Thus gazing, I discerned through purple mist
The far faint glimmer of white dwellings—kisst

By the sun's parting benison ; they gleamed
Like white plumed birds on a pool's marge at eve,
Felt more than seen ; and there were some that
 beamed

Yet faintlier,—nor did the eye perceive
Their furtive radiance but when it slid
Soft o'er the vicinage—blue glooms that hid
The giant contours of the awful crag
Towering heavenward into peak and jag.

And now, the crested level of the lake
Flushing to crimson, its live billows wake
And rear into curled surges, with a wash
And seething impetus that flees the lash
Of gales free following in stormy crash.
O that some shallop had lain moored at hand
To bear me exulting to yon charmed strand !
How it had bounded like a sensate thing,
Shaking the billow from its live white wing,
Lifting my heart into each skyward leap
That mocked the tempest and wide-spurned the deep !
And when, the fierce and perilous open past,
We slid into a marble port at last—
Girt by the city and high fringed with towers,
Heaped domes, and terraces aflame with flowers
Soft stirring in the wind :—O then, methought,
On the wide porphyry of wave-washed stairs
Descending by grand flights into the port,
I should encounter a loved form that wears
The likeness of a dream—soon known, swift flashed
Home in glad impulse to my waiting soul,

That long had sought, in lineaments that clashed,
Its wholeness of nobility ;—the goal
And utter consummation of my end
To find one worthy of the name of Friend.

He welcoming with hand-clasp and free glance
Of perfect sympathy—without a taint
Of cold-eyed prudence or world-taught restraint—
He welcoming, methought we should advance
In rapt communion through the life and stir
And pleasurable tumult of the hour,—
Thronged round with faces that reveal no slur
Of pettiness or purblind mockery,
Of ignorant disdains that flee and lour
At the white lights that sound their vacancy ;
Fair faces, stamped with reason on the brow :
Seen but at intervals or dreamt till now.
And thus environed we should quit the quay,
Setting our footsteps from the evening sea,
Wending us inland between many a gate,
High arch, and pillared portico ; and wait
While sudden melodies were caught along
From open casements, to die soft among
Lorn foliage in dark gardens, where the leaves
Swooned drowsily to murmurs of white streams,
That naturally flowing talked in dreams.

Thus ever onward with discourse that weaves
A tissue of the broken ends let fall—
Left to futurity in this pale life,
And serving but to ravel up the ball

Of limitable knowledge, and breed strife ;—
Thus ever onward, till the mountain rears,
Tapering darkly to its peaks snow-soft,
And the tiered woods twine dizzily aloft
To tremble in the starlight—tiers on tiers.
And here the bosom of the rock was riven
By a wide gorge that penetrated even
To the dark mountain's heart—or thus it seemed :
For from the cavernous recess there gleamed
Fixed white of churning waters, hung on the pall
Of the ascending distance, fall on fall.
And we went upward by a path that climbed
On the crag's edge and dizzily o'erhung
The flood, that scattered on a rock-sown bed,
Clave through the solemn woods and hoarsely sang
A melancholy dirge to the night breeze,
Blending its voice with whispers of the trees
In deep-toned harmony. We paused full soon
Upon a heath-clad plateau that stood sheer
Into the pulsing night. And now the Moon
Burst sudden her black bonds, and riding clear,
Rained down her radiance on a fringe of pines
That stood as shrinking from the treacherous rim
Of the wild eminence in peering lines :
A nodding host, mysteriously dim.

And here, embowered amid foliage,
All tranquilly unmindful of the rage
And fumé of the wild flood beneath, there stood
A white-walled cottage glimmering in a wood,
Breathing an atmosphere of deep repose,

With scent of jasmine and the climbing rose ;
'Mid lawns encircled by a winding walk
For reverie designed, or thoughtful talk ;
With little shady nooks for hours of ease,
Or thought, or study, or whate'er may please :
A poet's paradise, a wanderer's rest,
Home realised at last : the yearlong quest
Of retrospective men whose toils are done :
The dream of many a poor driven one
Athirst for solitude with two or three,
And these the nearest that may ever be.

Methought we entered and a smiling round
Of faces turned expectant at the sound
Of our approach. My suave reception o'er,
We joined the circle, and the minutes flew
As tranquilly as they had flown before
Our entering : for all forbore to show
A vulgar eagerness to probe and pry
Through voice and gesture, lineament and eye,
For tidings of the stranger,—what he was,
And how he might be catalogued off-hand.
Thus I had leisure, in full many a pause
Of easy unconstraint that marked and spanned
The natural transition to new themes—
And all of them were noble :—I had space
To note in every countenance a grace
Not born of beauty, but which seems
To lend a beauty of its own, a charm
Breathed from the spirit outward like a balm :—
The touch that moves e'en dullards to confess

There's that more lovely than mere loveliness ;
The cheerful seriousness and calm content
Of minds aye active—to a purpose bent ;
The seeing eye and reasonable glance,
The brow suffused with more than common sense ;
A front and attitude in all things just,
Kind and considerate, engendering trust ;
And something of the candour of a child,
With reticence instinctive reconciled :
A child's bright eagerness to know and learn,
With man's grown aptitude to swift discern ;
And last,—to bend all unto noble ends,—
The sympathy imagination lends.

These in their essence I now thought to trace
Upon each smiling and expectant face
That turned upon the wanderer and his guest.
But there were two—distinguished from the rest :
Twin sisters, as I judged ; and each was fair
With the sweet fairness of ripe womanhood.
Their every attitude, their sunny hair,
Their shape and lineaments, proclaimed them kin ;
Yet they were different, and each might win
Full admiration in the self-same mood.
Each seemed the complement of each ; the elder
And first-born of the twain—for so I held her,
Seeing the sweet authority she used—
Was meditative : as if occupied
In dwelling on some happiness that fused
Her thoughts in one pure crucible of love
And tender watchfulness ; for, though she tried

To banish the fond fancies her mind wove,
And centre all attention in the hour,
Like her fair sister, and enjoy the flower
Of present things,—yet often she sat mute,
And all unconsciously her tender glance
Strayed forth to seek him whom she loved—the root
And fibre of her being—my new friend.
And he smiled promises—all guardedly,
That none might fathom who was there to see.

Not thus the younger ; her clear eyes adance
With merriment, and those bright looks that lend
A radiance of hopeful life to each
Melodiously modulated speech
Of happy girlhood,—she was all intent
On sipping the sweet moment ere 'twas spent ;
Her soul was on her lips : the linking thought
Flashed forth into ripe being ere 'twas sought ;
She looked and heard, and her whole self replied —
Expression, voice, gaze, gesture, attitude,
But with the fitness that is e'er allied
To full sincerity, the latitude
Of frankness in the presence of true friends,
That scorns dull reticence of that which lends
The crowning charm to human intercourse—
Though unadulterate from its first sweet source.
Yet there were moments when she pensive sate,
In maiden pensiveness that wove a dream
Should show fulfilment of the things that late
Cast shadows of their coming on the stream
Of her friends' eloquence aglow with hope ;—

Should gladden her own life with fuller scope
To act the impulse native to her heart
And play in freedom her appointed part.—
Then many a little act and look I saw
Of sisterly affection, and true courtesy
To those about her, that was sweet to see ;
And once, while one read from a book some verse
Of his own making—that painted the war
Of passion and right instinct in a soul alive
To the quick influence of beauty ; and the curse
That blighted his whole being who could strive,
Yet never conquer, where he once desired
With the fell ardour of a mind that fired
All wished for things with light of genius,—then,
The gracious wave of her young bosom rose
And fell—and softly heaved and sank again—
In pitying sympathy. The thought uprose :
Here is the making of a perfect wife,
A joy for younger years, a friend for life :
She is unwedded, and her sister wed
To him who is the noblest among men—
My late found friend. This was my thought ; I said
Indifferent things that lent assistance then
To bring me near the subject of my thought ;
No difficult quest with such an open mind,
That freely gave and freely took in kind,
Lavishing what was delicately sought.

What more I dreamed will not be long to tell.
Methought that Love and Friendship were both
found

Beneath one roof, and evermore did dwell
Twin visitants from heaven in my heart ;
That in the sweet and customary round
Of pleasure, duty, labour, and communion,
Four kindred minds grew ever into union,
Retaining all their individual part ;
That summer days flew by like a brief hour,
Each season brought its variable fruits ;
Each morrow saw the blowing of a flower :
High thoughts to happy minds, braced in pursuits
Do yield each faculty the food most suits.
Nor was the woman's the less worthy part,
But she of man the natural counterpart
In spirit as in structure ; yet the same,
Of the same elements compact, that used
In new proportion, added, in her frame,
The just equivalent of his, and fused
Both to one culminating type, complect
Of perfect heart and perfect intellect.

Ah, sunny dream—imperishable flower !
Dear effluence of a meditative hour !
Still, still thou lingerest, by memory limned
In hues untarnished and in light undimmed.
I stood, and lo ! the mountain was a cloud,
The beckoning azure of the lake but space :
All—but the texture of an evening mood,
A vision of the day's departed grace !
I was alone—unfriended and unloved :
Sad o'er the vacant hills giant shadows moved ;
The thickened air pressed heavy on my brow ;

The breeze sighed drearily, and moaned the bough
Along the meadow ghostly vapours crept,
Wreathing the hollows ; the lorn streamlet wept
In long faint sobs half-stifled by the wind,—
Sobbing for changes, times past out of mind.
It seemed all Nature was bowed down in woe,
Or hounded into madness by Despair ;
I knew not whether I should turn and go,
Or yield to impulse in the meadow there
And mutter with white lips to the drear sky
A thousand curses on the Power that lifts,
If but for a poor moment, the dark veil
To show between the unsatiating rifts
Dreams of the Possible that strike Earth pale
And fill her void with less than vacancy !

I turned and went,—and calm grew in my veins—
'Twas better to be still than to despair ;
And wending homeward through the glimmering lanes
A thousand scents came wafted on the air :
The stars shone out—forerunners of a host,
And distant, gazed in deep serenity :
The fume and passion of my heart was lost,
And stilled the promptings of my vanity.
What then was I, that should desire the best ?
A feeble thing, and hardly even a man :
Presuming, in a little knowledge drest,
The highways of a nobler race to scan ;
Aspiring to what never could be mine,
Nor would content me, could I hope to gain :
Mere fantasies upreared on the design

We are permitted to behold in vain.
Far other must the spiritual mould
Of beings who are destined to enjoy
Free exercise of faculties unrolled,
Be constitute,—and chastened of alloy :
The bestial and brutish that still clings,
Inseparably commingled with the ore.
We men have but the rudiments of wings,
The wish, but not the faculty to soar ;
Our pleasure is apportioned to our worth,
We merit but the least of our desires ;
'Tis Heaven we pretend to—but the Earth
Holds all that our mortality requires !

Love Lost.

Do you remember the dear olden days, Love —
Dead, but embalmed in my memory still :
O rises the heart to your far-dwelling eyes, Love,—
The tears—when you gaze over valley and hill ;—
Do you remember ?

Do you remember how living was sweetened
With fond looking back, and more fond looking on :
How the interval grew with the longing that deepened,
And each eager meeting new ecstasy won ;—
Do you remember ?

Do you remember the stir and the movement,
The streets of the city we wandered along :
Ah Love, we scarce knew the sweet hidden things love
meant
Till we two together passed strange through the
throng ;—
Do you remember ?

Do you remember our glances all guarded
That spoke of the hours when we communed alone,—
The long kiss I stole, that so richly rewarded
Those hours of veiled homage,—you made me atone!
Do you remember ?

Do you remember the fanciful measure
 Once limned our young lives in a mirror of joy ?
 How well I remember it !—'Tis an old treasure
 I keep with the others : its sweets never cloy.—
 Do you remember ?

Do you remember the strange inspiration
 It lent to our mood in the whirl of the dance ?
 Man was noble—sweet woman worth all adoration,
 Her soul on her lips—all her love in her glance ;—
 Do you remember ?

Do you remember the soft summer nights, Love,
 When we at the window sat watching the stars ?
 We were mute, for the hour had a thousand delights,
 Love,
 Imprisoned poor speech with invisible bars ;—
 Do you remember ?

Do you remember the weird thrilling influence
 Breathed from yon canopy's quiescent deep,
 The kiss of the night-wind—its magical incense
 Full fraught with a perfume of flowers asleep ;—
 Do you remember ?

Do you remember your place at my shoulder—
 Pale cheeks in the starlight—dear deep-dwelling
 eyes :
 Close-locked to my breast—my fond lips growing
 bolder,
 When kiss followed kiss to your music of sighs,—
 Do you remember ?

O bountiful life ! O unmerited treasures !

Whose lustre we know not until they are lost,
When, memory stripping the veil from our pleasures,
We see them for priceless—ah ! when they are lost :
When we remember.

Do you remember when fancy is bidden

By silence and night to roam whither it will—
The hour of unveiling, when all that lay hidden
Stands forth in the brain 'mid the hush and the still :
Do you remember ?

O then do you rise, between slumber and waking,
With damps on your forehead, wild thoughts in your
heart :

Do you reach through the darkness with arms that are
aching

For all that is lost—and that cannot depart !—

Do you remember ?

Do you remember ? Not thus ? And not ever ?

Perhaps in the twilight—the hour before dawn :
When you come face to face with your soul—O when-
ever

The cloaks of the day fall like garments outworn,

O *then* you remember !

Mature.

THOUGH pent within the city walls
We ne'er forget the days
When, happy liberated thralls,
We trod in woodland ways.

The glory of the summer sky
Survives, an azure stain,
An aerial translucency
Hung up within the brain.

The inward ear, preserving yet
The voices that we love,
Re-echoes the harmonious fret
Of foliage above—

The lonesome shiver of the leaves,
Like surf on a sea-shore,
The birds that chatter in the eaves
Or tranquilly outpour

Their melody that far resounds
Beneath the vaulted green :
The many deep and quiet sounds
That thrill the woodland scene.

And mingled perfumes of the morn,
Dank odours of the pine,
The chilly fragrance of young dawn,
Scent of the jessamine

And climbing rose that frame the door
And haunt the cottage sill,—
Are treasured up for evermore
To purify us still.

The shimmer of the meadow-brook—
A ribbon of blue sky
Wherein the osiers bend to look
In dark perplexity

Whether it be thing of earth or heaven—
So heavenly its smile,—
Lives in the memory ; and even
The yew-hedge and the stile

That led by field-paths through a realm,
A sounding sea of grain
Whose windy billows rise to whelm
The passer,—these again

We fancifully invoke
'Mid passion and turmoil
To gladden and rejuvenate
The mind grown old in toil.

There linger on sweet memories
Of mornings when the air
Was liquid joy : all seemed to please,
And everything was fair :

Supremely fair—immeliolate :
Intoxication lay
In standing at the meadow-gate
And gazing far away

To where the dwindled hills were blue,
A Promised Land of hope,
And all the intervening view
Of wood and sunny slope

Breathed solitude and heavenly calm,
With peace of distant sounds :—
The dog barks faintly on the farm—
The cock-crow far resounds !

The least activity of man—
That little busy ant—
Engrosses, as he stoops to scan
Each bush and budding plant ;

The glitter of the pruning-knife,
The scythe's recurrent ray,
Are matters deep as aught in life,
Sufficient for to-day.

O happy he whose labour lies
In solitudes like these :
Thrice blest the man who daily hies
To work beneath the trees !

Whom voices of the flying birds
Salute, and the faint hum
Of insects circling in the woods,
The deep pulsating thrum

Of reaping in the harvest fields,
Do gladden as he works :
For each a consolation yields
For every ill that irks.

He feels them as upon the edge
Of sense, unheeding all :
His boundary the sun-topped hedge,
The distinct garden wall.

The very clouds that sail the blue
Make music in his mind,
As their shadows travel o'er the view
And climb the hill behind.

All is a framework for the thought,
Perspective in the brain,
Lending a tone of largeness caught
From the far-spreading plain,

The silence of the empty woods,
The spell of distant sounds,
The mystery of Nature's moods,—
The riddle she propounds

And answers not eternally,
 Leaving us to divine
 From all that she diurnally
 Reveals of her design.—

Her methods are direct and rude,
 She works with a firm hand ;
 Indifference in her attitude,
 She moves but to command.

In man the Higher Nature lies :
 The individual lot
 Moves his best sympathy ; he tries,
 Concentreing his thought,

To remedy the dire effect
 By pointing to the cause ;
 To shape with might of intellect
 The bent of iron laws ;

To find the by-way to the end
 And save the weary round :
 Himself a power to amend
 The roughness of the ground.—

Such are the thoughts attend the way
 Of who, to thought inclined,
 Perceives in Nature day by day
 The mirror of the mind ;

As one that gazing in a brook,
Oft visited and dear,
Beholds each day his altered look,
Its changing hope and fear.

And many common things there are,
Leaving no deep impress,
Yet in themselves no meaner share
Of Nature's loveliness.

This weed that botanists forget
Because it is not rare,
Nor scent nor flower hath—and yet
'Tis exquisitely fair :

Within the furrow-line it rears
A wealth of sunny green :
Its ray illuminates and cheers
The nude and barren scene.

Yon butterfly that flaunts and stays
With heavy, wavering flight,
Contrasts in ever-varying ways
Her ordinary white.

The mellowness of farmyard sounds
Unheeded fills the ear
Where woodland minstrelsy resounds,
To men and poets dear.

But I would hymn the placid chat
Of ducks upon a pool,
Where sunbeams straggle to the plat
In the labyrinthine cool ;

The trumpet of the turkey-cock
In the echoing farmyard ;
The chorus of the scolding flock
Of geese upon the sward

Of village greens :—all are replete
With memories of eld,
And tell of hours when life was sweet,
Care easily dispelled.

The peacock's warning clarinet
And melancholy scream
A sense of hidden lawns beget,
A visionary dream

Of deep recesses where the breeze
Blows dank with undried showers,
With perfume of the tangled trees
And heavy breath of flowers ;—

Where fallen zones of heavenly light
Lie burning on the grass,
And stately blooms in gardens bright
Nod to the airs that pass.

Whilst over all a sad repose
Breathes from the vacant lawn,
As swift the sunlight pales and glows
And momentarily is gone.

The stirring grass, the bending trees,
Clouds flying overhead,
Awake, when shadow chills the breeze,
Vague yearnings to the dead—

The many who have laughed and loved
In this secluded scene,
And lingered while long shadows moved
Athwart the golden green ;

The destinies begun, fulfilled :
Hopes of the young and fair :
The voices that were early stilled :
The love that grew to care.—

Methinks yon casement with its brow
Of sombre ivy-green
Is like an eye that muses now
On all that it has seen.

O Nature ! had I skill to use
This organ of sweet speech
Such ecstasy I would infuse
Into the soul of each

Poor toiler in the city din,
Each merchant in the mart,
That he would worship thee within
A shrine set in his heart,

And ever seek thee as a friend
When Destiny grew pale,—
Finding in thee, unto the end,
A power of swift avail

To lave and clarify the heart
With simple, childlike joys :
Freed from the unrest crowds impart,
The passion that destroys ;

Become a self-sufficing man,
Strong in his liberty,
Content to reap those joys he can
From pure love, and from thee !

Yet would I tell him thou art coy,—
Not wantonly possessed :
Mute, unresponsive as a boy—
Too ardently caressed ;

Thy solitudes most meet for those
Whom worthy toils engage ;
Thy silences most sweet to those
Who act upon thy stage ;

And thou the background to the deed
The theatre of duty :
Who court thee idly know the need
Of more than thy sweet beauty.

They crave a living interest,
Hopes to be born with Spring,
Near prospects, like rich Summer dresst,
With fruits ripe Autumns bring ;

A bent to foster and improve,
Affection to illumine dull days :—
O then thou wilt reward their love,
And satisfy always !

To the Blackbird.

HARK to the blackbird singing in the wood !
The sunlight glows and pales :
White clouds flee over heaven's dark flood :
The shadow falls and fails.

O solemn voice, whose deep suave resonance
Floats fitfully, as muffled, from afar,
Spirit of all loftiness and echoing shade,
Voice of the forest and of summer indolence,
Tell me—ah tell me the dim thoughts these are
Thou hast awakened in my soul,—say, ere they fade

Why, as I listen to thy speaking note,
Significant as are all half-heard things,—
Why am I saddened, as its echoes float
O'er the vale's vacancy resounding :
As the sweet music of it falls and clings
Upon the sense strained to its sounding ?
Why am I saddened as I stand and gaze
Wide o'er the cornfields that, in solitary sweep,
Roll billowed by the breeze
To the wood's border, and there sink to sleep,
Watched over by the dark conspiring trees ?
Soft sadness that thy meditative note, lorn bird,
Crowns with enhancement of all memories
Of elder days thy brief clear melody have heard.—

I see the orchards in full bloom,
Wide gardens in their vacant charm,
I see again the tranquil farm
Through early twilight's vocal gloom ;
And all imaginings these bred— [dead,
Thoughts, passions, moods, have long been
Rise up and living shape assume,
Instinct with a forgotten zest ;
Obedient to thy solemn hest,
O blackbird thrilling in the wood :
Thou phantom of remembered good !

A tranquil unconcern is thine,
As of a quiet mind :
Thy voice and solitude combine,
And are but one, combined ;
Thy fragmentary trill
Seems pausing for reply :
So quietly clear it is and still,
Beneath the quiet sky.
And, as I wander where it calls,
Still sounding from afar,
It falls upon the hush as falls
On heaven the first wan star.

Hark 'tis the blackbird singing in the wood,
The sunlight glows and pales :
White clouds flee over heaven's dark flood :
The shadow falls and fails.

Why am I gladdened as thy note bursts forth
With a near loudness, and dies echoing away?
A voice, not now of indolence, but seeming fraught
With the quiet purpose of one speaking as he works.

O voice of purpose, thou art far more worth
Than those fond croonings o'er a distant day :
Voice not of indolence, thy strain hath taught
My listening soul where consolation lurks.

Thus we behold, in nature's faithful glass,
The just reflection of our proper moods ;
Mutely we question her, and pause, and pass :
She answers—like the blackbird in the woods.

Occasional Pieces

Memorial of a Visit in Summer to the English Lakes.

I.

DEAR LAND of beauty and repose ! How oft
Have I reverted in my thoughts to thee
In cheerless hours, 'mid scenes unbeautiful,
Wherein the joys most native to my heart
Found not an echo, and shade after shade
Seemed crossing to make twilight of my life :
How oft in spirit and with what eagerness
Have I returned to thee ! Now, when at length
I do behold thee, thou art not less fair,
Less radiant than of old when I first knew,
In boyhood's happy hour, the strange deep spell
Cast by thy mountains on the sense that wakes
To the new beauty of the world. And time,
Not idly spent, has armed me with a power
Of watchfulness, a faculty unknown
In younger years of piercing to the core
Of these fair outward shows, which while they please,
Claim kinship in the mind with all that life,
Experience and reflection have stored there ;
And are significant of things we deem
Widely dissimilar—nay, are allied
With them by more than the analogy
Whose fitness is the measure of the bond.—

Armed with new powers of vision I have strayed
In liberty unwonted through thy vales,
Thy heights among. Yet something I have missed—
And the loss saddens me. Where are the joy,
The keen expectancy, the sense of awe,
The bold bewildering fancies did throng quick,
The colouring romantic and the newness,
Bright, gay, and wonderful, of that far day
When life lay all untried? Ah! they are gone;
And the reflection I behold is pale
And of its mystery despoiled—the charm
Of the Unknown Possible, once boundless realm!
So loss breeds gain. We stay not what we are;
And the quick pleasures did erst rouse in us
A very tumult of impassioned thought,
Now satisfy and soothe.

II.

How privileged the man who in sweet verse
Records the memory of a transient mood,
The hour's rich effluence, and to some fair scene
Which after-time shall consecrate to him,
Bequeathes reflection of his own proud fame
By linking it with harmony of song!
Thee chiefly, WORDSWORTH, I would name, whose
pen,
Adding new lustre to a favoured land,
Hath breathed the enchantment of thy gentle muse
O'er these green prospects and this quiet vale;
And even as a voice given to the hills,

Interpreted their eloquence to men.
In thee, sweet GRASMERE, hath been wrought a
change
Well-nigh incalculable since the day
When first the Bard saw in thy 'hollow vale'
The resting place his wanderings had sought,
The coveted retirement of his dreams,
Simplicity's abode, plain Virtue's home.
And yet, methinks, for one who is not apt
To lightly hold change evil, there survives
A lonely wildness in thy hills—a weight
Of stillness that doth breathe Eternity :
The air half somnolent and partly sad
Of life that is fallen far behind the times.
'Tis scenes like these inspire the deepest love :
For their soft melancholy is a mask
Falls for the lover, each dear hidden charm
The dearer for its secrecy when known.

III.

HERE, EASEDALE, by thy solitary tarn,
Sunk in a moss-couch, I have lain and listened
To the wave lapping on thy bouldered shore ;
While stirring in the grass, the sun-warmed wind,
Pensively musical, gave soft relief
From noontide heats and lulled me to repose.
O solitary lakelet, thy wide shores,
Silent and tenantless, do breathe a calm
Not common in the world ; they seem to speak
Of an eternity to which man's life,

The measure of his sorrows and his joys,
Is but an instant on the dial of time,
A fever-fit soon spent and overpast !
Yet, as I listen to the lamb's lorn cry
Floats echoing from the fell, and to the bee
Drowsily murmuring his fitful tune ;
And as I gaze upon the vacant slopes,
Distinct and beautiful this heaven-bright day,
O I am gladdened and do inly feel
A deep contentment, a sweet sense of rest,
A joy impersonal would bid me merge
My being in the spirit of the scene,
One with its gladness, and at rest with it
In storm and sunshine through Eternity !

IV.

THERE is a path leads under lofty oaks
By the soft-sounding GRETA—a quiet spot,
And visited of few. The impending bank
Slips craggily to where the broad grave flood
Lies like a mirror, darkened by the shade
Of the o'erhanging boughs, yet interspersed
With pictures of the variable sky,
Now gray, now blue. Upon this cloistered walk
In summer twilight when the uncertain trees
Do make a mystery above, I paced ;
Hearing in fancy the immingled tones
Of those to whom this place is consecrate :
Him of the open brow, the weak great man,
Past-master of the tuneful line ; and him,

The life-long dweller in this vale, whose song
 Lit Shelley to his greatness ; while the third,
 The grave philosopher of Grasmere Vale,
 Seemed in my fancy to be listening
 In thoughtful silence unto high discourse,
 Long since forgotten.—Then, when blue night
 Hung imminent above me, I repaired
 To the tall manor-house, whose sightless eyes
 And ghostly form enshrouded in dark trees
 Seemed like a vision of the past returned
 To haunt the meadow with strange memories.
 Meet dwelling for a poet ! I have seen
 A paradise of beauty from yon dark
 And melancholy casement, when the morn
 Poured its warm glory on the time-stained floor :
 ‘Mountain and lake and vale,’ the noblest scene
 E’er casement look’d upon ; and when the sun
 Sinks in red splendour o’er yon crowded fells,
 A realm of fancy—as if not of earth.

V.

LONE BASSENTHWAITE, thy unfrequented marge
 Is far more dear to me than prouder shores,
 The haunts of men. Here, throned upon a rock,
 A time-worn boulder sleeping in the sun,
 I sit and lord it o’er thy lake alone
 In regal grandeur ; while the unceasing waves
 Roll tributary at my feet, and sound
 Like murmurs of a multitude ; the woods
 Are for my canopy, the wide free scene

A presence-chamber where the eye grows soft
In its far travelling ; and yon steep hills
Do stretch their leafy feet upon the flood
Like arras drooped upon a throne-room floor.—
Not vain the metaphor. This very morn
I bathed me in the cool calm of the lake,
My feet entangled in its mystery ;
And felt the power of its unseen depth
And living vastness penetrate my soul.
Thus rulers are upborne, who yet must feel
The living power of the multitude
Supports them : by whose sufferance alone,
By passive quietude of whose fell strength,
Their station is maintained while it doth serve.

VI.

IT was a fair still evening, and the sun,
Sinking in splendour o'er the western fells,
Lit up a vision of contrasted power—
Of earthly grandeur, and bright heavenly calm,
Will long live in my memory. Below,
Thy barren crags, dark WASTDALE, lay asleep,
Dreaming in twilight gray ; while o'er the lake—
Lonely and silent as a mountain tarn,
And with a tarn's weird mystery—there ran
Swift films upon the leaden waves revealed
The sighing passage of the night-wind there,
Unfelt above. But o'er the tract of sky
Framed by the darkling crags, and reaching up
To the high cope of heaven went rosy arms

And radiating bars upon the blue
Unfathomable loftiness : like spokes
Of a tremendous wheel they seemed—arranged
At a just equidistance—woven of clouds
Minute and barely visible till scanned
With an attentive eye : fallen into lines
Whose ordered symmetry might seem the work
Of the lord marshall of heaven's pageantry.—
Transient the show : for when the light died out
The breeze rose with a dreary sound, and Awe
Reigned undisputed. When I gained the shore
I stood to listen how the mirthless waves
Came hurrying landward in a feverish haste,
Fleeing they knew not what, lashing the beach
With short sharp buffets. The denuded cliffs
Rose silently and sheer into the heaven
That like an evening sea stretched in wan leagues
Even to the confines of Immensity.
And now the hither shore, touched by the spell
Of the black waters, woke to mystic life,
Teeming with images—fantastic forms—
Gestures and motions of humanity
Gone crazed, yet of a stern significance :
Meanings and attitudes in tree and stone,
And in the fingered furze swayed by the wind
That in its passage seemed to voice strange threats,
Mock courtesies, jeers, gibes, and freezing oaths.
Rocks nodded in their converse : and the crags
Held far-off parley in the grieving heaven
Till sense reeled and reality was not.
And as I turned to go, a long lorn cry

Burst from the mountains and even as I stood
Rang echoing anew over the vale
Till the wind strangled it : one of those sounds
The shepherd hears unmoved ; but with a power
To breed imaginings of peril—fraught
With instant pictures of distress for those
To whom they are a mystery. The sound
Still lingers in my ear : it will remain
The expression of thy loneliness, Wastdale,
The voice of thy weird silence while I live.

VII.

FAREWELL, sweet country ! O I have drunk deep
Of thy enchantments and indulged the sense
Of beauty and wild grandeur to the full !
Thy lineaments, soft sunken in my soul,
Have framed there a vast treasury of thought—
A peaceful refuge for dull hours to come
Of which none may deprive me. I have viewed
Thee in all summer moods. Thy morning smile—
The rich delight of yet another day
To be spent slowly as I list, each hour
With its own beauty for my spoil—warm sweets
To linger o'er, sipping their latest drop
As bees do in the blossoms and pass on :—
Such promise was in all thy morning smiles
When the sun woke me from a dreamless sleep
To the immeasurable prospect of the day,
Rich in vicissitude on ways unknown,
Fraught with safe perils and untiring toils,

Filled with surprises and delights that live
To be the texture of our retrospect in age,
Our fireside talk in snug familiar homes.
A spirit of adventure was abroad !
And the light limbs, all satiate with sleep,
Glowed in an ardour to be up and out
Where the air sang of joyaunce on the hills,
Cool morning shade in woods, and mid-day ease
After stern toiling on the steep. O Life,
Thou art not barren of all joys we dream
That offerest such things—thou’rt sometimes kind !

And when I fared forth in the vale, behold !
The hills lay broidered with a thousand streams
All silvery flashing on their flanks, and hung
High on their craggy brows in threads and beads
Of liquid dazzlement caught from the sun.
(Low in the silence of the night soft rain
Lisped at my window while I slept, and lent
The secret hour a mystery not her own.)
So forth into the world ! Past where the lake
Looks up through slipping woods, her sunny blue
O’erwoven with fine filigree of leaves :
Where fleeing lines of light flash on the waves,
And star-points wink innumerable eyes
Deep through the roomy shade : where underwood
Piles all the sloping floor, and bees hum loud,
And Peace and Quietness sit throned in green.

And here contemplant I have paused to mark
The music of the tumbling beck—a sound

Mysterious and solemn in the woods :
Fraught with the horror of the unseen course
In the deep ravine, through spuming cavern pools
Of perilous access that boom in blackest night.
Hark, what a sweet wild rushing in the shade !
Leaves cluster to re-echo it : the sound
Steals through the silence like a silvern thread,
Or voice of sun-shower heard in topmost boughs
Ere falls the first drop to the startled earth.
I linger not, though it were sweet to stay,
Listing forever to the deep still sound :
The day invites me to be gone where bright
The heavenly hills lie painted on the sky
In unreal splendour ; where the rocks grow pale ;
And trees toil up with trailing summer skirts,
Or like a wall stand stiffly on the crag,
Rigid and motionless as clustered ore ;
Where the bold sheep, slow climbing on the fell,
Rains down loose boulders on the path below,
Jarring the silence ; and the wavering dyke
Mounts hardily, or like a thing alive
Bursts through the thicket and glides round the fall.
Where light lies like a garment on the earth
And vale and mountain whisper to be gone !

Thus preluded the morn as, with light step
And heart exulting in steep toils to come,
I walked 'mid fragrance of the undried dews
Thy fastness, BORROWDALE, toward. Sweet name !
That even as a woman's name grown sweet
With echoes of her fairness on men's tongues,

Full oft had pleased me ere yet I knew
Thy rumoured charms, incomparable Vale !
So sang the morn, and Derwent soft replied
There where she wanders in a wide white bed
To sink, amid her guardian cliffs, adown
A bowery wildness to her own calm lake—
Methinks true Happiness had never lit
(Brief sojourner !) upon my path till then—
Till that most blessed morn. Not in the throng
Of multitudes where bright romantic gleams
Pass fitfully athwart, borne on the wings
Of melody, to flashing of gay lights
And sounds of merriment heard in the wind :
Not in the strange blending of quick pleasures
And most memorable sadness—O not there,
In the vast city, was one eager dream
Of pictured happiness filled with a rest
So deep and so impersonal as this !
All things were eloquent. They were informed
With a significance caught from all hope,
All knowledge and all truth ; they were filled full
With the suggestions of a happiness
That should be one with Nature—as if merged
In the general fitness : a deep quiescence
Of being with no passionate delights,
But of broad contrast, shading like the day
Into the alternative of long-drawn night :
An even progress tranquilly fulfilled.

'Twere vain to trace my passage to the heights—
The opening grandeurs and uprising crests

Of the nude rugged mountains. Awefully
They loom upon the view when at the last
The winding path leads o'er a platform hung
'Twixt heaven and earth—a precipice beneath,
And from the sky-line a sheer dropping depth
Scarred grievously with wide deep yawning wounds
Do waft a hollow murmur on the breeze
Of floods that rage and leap invisibly
In the dark bowels of the steep ; the while
Their muffled tones confer a living voice
Upon the silence—the deserted calm—
Seems listening to the blowing of the grass.
Farewell wild Solitudes ! when I returned
At nightfall from my commune with your glooms,
I was o'erburthened with a mystery,
And even as a man forced unawares
Into the presence of unearthly things
Not symbolised in speech. A spirit reigns
In your wide fastnesses doth breathe strange thoughts,
And most unspeakable, to earthly minds,
Yet having a dim likeness to the known,
And to be fathomed in a later day.

The Brook.

How shall I picture it, how lend a dress
To the faint image of such loveliness,
Or cast a more than visionary light
On the rich roundness of that perfect sight?
In truth I know not ;—nor might skill avail
To emulate in verse the painter's touch :
For words the craftiest are but a pale
And soulless counterfeit of such.

'Twas but a brooklet that along a mead
Stole lingeringly, as it were loth to tread
In wantonness apart the blooms and grasses
That grew upon its banks in tangled masses.
Deep was its channel—but of sparkling clearness ;
And through it might be viewed in dimpling nearness
All the rich luxury of spangled weed
That chokes such runnels, as it would impede
The too tumultuous ardour of their flushes.
Wrapping the marge, a border hem of rushes
Blent with tall spear-grass, whose assembled bloom
Lined the long landscape with a purple gloom :
Nodding and whispering with each air that sighed
Faint through the valley and of faintness died.

In mid-space where the slender stream outspread
All at its ease, and lolled into a pool,

No motion flecked it, save one dimpling thread
That through the stilly water-herbage cool
Forged a slow passage, and bequeathed its trace
In a bright undulating streak of sand—
Clean-swept, disparting with a furtive grace
The feathered umbrage by the ripples fanned.
O clean and dark and deep were the retreats
Wherein the eye plunged with an easeful sense
Of murmurous repose !—e'en such as greets
The blinded traveller by the light intense
Of noontide, who deep hidden in a wood,
Feasts on its verdancy in gratitude.

Full many a summer hour I lay beside
Yon slumb'rous pool, and marked the insects glide
Like little busy boats on a calm sea.
Stretched in a pleasurable lethargy,
With forests of tall grasses o'er my head,
Sunk to the level of the flowers that shed
A mingled meadow perfume on the breeze,
Here have I slumbered in the drowsy heat,
My lullaby the wind in the lorn trees,
The meditative gurgle at my feet ;
And for a coverlet the dappled shadows
That shift and glide upon the edge of meadows.

Oft when at evening the enchanted sun,
Swelling to majesty, had just begun
To deck with panoply of lurid glooms
The sky's long corridor, aflaunt with plumes,
I went and bowed me o'er the lucent tide

And gazed down to the grottoes cool and wide,
The rich dark valleys of empurpled weed,
Star-studded, where the silver minnow feed,
And convoluted mounts uprising near,
Kiss the smooth surface and again sink sheer.
Then, if perchance a little straw or blade
Came floating past, the nether world would fade,
And all its dark luxuriance give place
To a sole prospect of the molten face
Of the wide flood, its ripples and its motes,
And every little life that swims or floats.
Anon, with a swift flash, this all was gone,
And the smooth mirror of the brooklet shone
With a soft copy of the airy scene
Hung up above it—darkly framed between
High overarching foliage, with a rim
Of flowers and grasses bowing on the brim.

Charmed with the threefold magic of the change,
Forthwith the mind essayed to rearrange
Its order in new sequence ; and withal,
Reviewing each, full soon beheld them all—
The bowery deep, the brooklet, and the sky—
Blent in an image of triunity,
Where high-domed cloud and river-grot mocked space
To hover in a tremulous embrace
Within the brook, until the dizzied eye,
Seeing nor earth nor rivulet nor sky,
Strayed into realms of faery fantasy.

E'en so the poet ; gazing on life's stream

Piercing the surface—lo ! a tender dream
Of unimaginable beauty meets
His meditative eye : cool dark retreats,
Chastened of care, where men may lie at ease,
Screened from the sunlight, fanned by the liquid
breeze.

Anon, reluctant, he must lose the vision,
Recalled to earth in cruelest transition ;
At mercy of the sticks and straws of fate
Strown on the chilly surface—that await
Our fairest moments to sail troubling past,
And ruffle our sweet visions to the last.—
Yet now the wind drops and a heavenly calm
Of templed cloud and fire-sheen sheds a balm
On the soft eye—whence mirrored he knows not,
Of air and azure and gold beams begot ;
Pouring effulgent from a realm celestial,
Swift intermingling with the shows terrestrial,
Holding him spell-bound, till he sees them blent
Confederate in the vital element.

Lake Song.

LIST to Melody winging her flight o'er the flood,—
Methought 'twas the Spirit of Evening,
Astir in the somnolent heart of the wood—
Fickle Fantasy mocking—deceiving.
By hollow and steep,
O'er shallow and deep,
The echo comes—hark to the echo !
As changing and shifting
And floating and drifting,
'Tis borne on the breeze from the meadow.

Come let us respond, as we sunder the wave,—
Send melody wafting and winging
In tremulous flight o'er the waters that lave
Our boat to the time of our singing.
From hollow and steep,
O'er shallow and deep,
The echo comes—list to the echo !
The hills lie a-sleeping,
Long shadows come creeping,
The glory is gone from the meadow.

Then sing we our refrain,
A soft united strain
In praise of thy descent, O Night !
To quicken us again.

The sky serene and pure,
Sown broadcast with thy stars,
Safe slumber doth assure
Through all the silent hours.

Good-Night ! Good-Night !
The Zephyr to the drowsy leaves
Is whispering—Good-Night !

SONNETS.

Memorial of a visit to Oxford in Spring.

I.

YE towers of OXFORD and fair mouldering halls
Whereon the grassy green of your wide courts
Throws an enriching lustre : calm resorts
Of learning where heaven's light more gravely falls,
Would that my eyes might, resting on your walls,
Indue the assured complacency of one
Here finds serene abode till life be done,
In social solitude whate'er befalls.
But other passions move and pleasures tempt,
And my path lies far from this pleasant place :
Yet, might I choose, from weary toils exempt,
Home from the wars, tired of the sun's hot face,—
As one seeks refuge who hath been betrayed,
So would I rest me in your learned shade.

II.

I NEVER saw the brightness of the way
Goes stretching from a college into life :
I never dwelt where scholarship was rife
And young ambition fired the eager day :
I never was spurred on by interchange

Of like thoughts and like ardours with like minds,
And so my thoughts grew dull as one who finds
No ear but is insensible and strange.
Then haste ye, youths : pluck blossoms while ye may
From learning's tree, now blossoming is rife :
Live in the hour, and fill up the quick day
With high thoughts and with profitable strife,—
Thrice happy, who look forward on the way
Runs glorious from a college into life.

III.

THE moon shone o'er thee, Oxford, when at night,
Wending from CARFAX, I pursued the street
To where by MAGDALEN parted waters meet :
Stealing through mystic umbrage to the light,
To glide where MERTON crowns the ruined Wall.
And as I went, full many a dark-browed pile
Cast its quiet shadow at my feet—the while
Quick Fancy's wand threw magic o'er them all.
For ghostly memories were crowding there
Of all great spirits who had paced beneath
Those silent portals—bearing with them hope,
Pride and ambition ; to whom life was fair
Even as it now was beneath yon blue cope
Of the soft heaven ; and who had passed away in
death.

IV.

WHO shall describe the loveliness of Morn
When with her bright blue mantle she invests
A towered city whose assembled crests

Sit proudly in the azure they adorn ?
What words might paint the pearliness of stone
 Rounded and moulded by a thousand storms :
 How to distil its variable forms
In this alembic of uncoloured tone ?
Words may not paint them ; and yet words could paint
 The channelled vista of the gilded street
 Where sky and earth in perfect embrace meet :
When she, the Earth, looks up like a fair saint
To the Heaven her lover and lies warm beneath
His old fond smile and feels his gentle breath.

V.

I SAW full many a garden couched in stone
 Lean smiling from the border of its bed,
 Shaking the tresses of an unkempt head
To see them mirrored where the waters shone.
Casements there were, high-angled and alone,
 Glimpsed through old foliage, that revealed within
 Bowers of seclusion where the brain might spin
Romance of eld from glories dead and gone.
The while the merry bells pealed o'er the fields,
 Ringing, immingling, with a silvery clang ;
 Rich-toned—heavy as an organ rang
Their lingering dissonance o'er streams and wealds—
Rising and swelling in the uncurtained sky
Like ærial music winging from on high.

VI.

IF you would breathe the spirit of past time,
 Go to the BODLEIAN where undefiled

The pomp of learning circles it enisled,
 And there muse on until the sweet grave chime
 Sounds the slow passage of a mournful hour
 Then trembles into silence like a dream.

The slumbrous backswirl of some mighty stream
 Is not more peaceful in its foliaged bower.
 Then turn ; and gazing in the stone-rimmed aisle
 Of linked quadrangles lessening between ;
 Surveying each beauty of the templed scene,
 Each carven pinnacle and windowed pile,—
 Own that even Fancy in her power grows pale,
 Seeing the substance of an Eastern tale.

VII.

HERE SHELLEY lived : here in this narrow room
 His spirit paused ere yet it took strong flight
 To soar even as the Skylark beyond sight :
 Here lived and dreamed unconscious of his doom.
 Methinks I see him in the wintry gloom
 Stretched in the firelight—worn out by the intense
 And unabating speed of his own vehemence :
 Waking anon his weird life to resume.
 Then what discourse ! Would that these silent walls
 Might yield up the faint echoes of that voice—
 Rising like bubbles from the dark profound
 Where sunken memories lie filmed and drowned.
 Hark ! Was that nothing but the fitful noise
 Blown from the city ? And heard ye no light
 footfalls ?

VIII.

THERE is disquietude in all new things.
Strange cities will reanimate hopes dead,
Aims long abandoned, for the mind is fed
With dreams of a larger living and takes wings,
Free of the fetters that acquaintance brings ;
Wont's boundaries removed, lo ! in their stead
Wide possibilities lie ranged ahead,
And Fancy harps unhindered on old strings.
So, peerless city, that hast not divulged
Thy springs of commonness, thy unlovely flaws,
Here have I in thought, not seeing thee through use,
Many an old day-dream plaintively indulged
Of life spent in full harmony with laws
Censure alike the Worldling and Recluse.

IX.

FAREWELL then, Oxford ! Though I ne'er should see
High summer's coronal of wealthier green
Shading thy temples and thy courts between,
Thou art not the less beautiful for me.
Though never again my happy lot should be
To wander spell-bound through each lordlier scene,
Time can but dull, not banish what has been,
And I will hoard these in my memory.
And so, withdrawing, viewing them apart
From all of temporal and familiar :
Merging each fragment in the blended whole,
I may discern thee imaged in my heart
Even as I once saw thee from afar,
Of form bereft, yet present in thy soul.

Miscellaneous Sonnets.

WITHIN the Sonnet, as in some quiet bower
Of old world garden-ground, 'tis sweet to muse,
Shaping the crystal of a thought diffuse
To long memorial of a transient hour.
Nor vain the toil, for who would win him power
To express the inmost essence of his thought
Must yield, though poet, to be slowly taught
While glossy leaves forerun the painted flower.
Full many a happy hour I hope to lie
Within this garden ground well loved of those
Whose starry names are written in the sky,
Whose songs have added lustre to the rose :
Whose deathless powers have consecrated thee,
Trim garden-ground of elder poesie.

THOUGH hope should fade and life breathe but of
sorrow,

There are two joys can never be outlived,
Two kindred passions careless of to-morrow,
That failing, are unfailingly revived.

One source supplies them, an exhaustless fountain
Welling forever from an unseen deep,
As pure as streams that issue from a mountain,
Profound as the dark haven of their sleep.

Whoso hath tasted of these sister streams
Will oft return and shall no surfeit know :

In youth, in age, or waking or in dreams,
Still in his ears the murmur of their flow
Shall blend and merge in a sole harmony :—
The love of Nature and of Poesy.

(1.)

IT seems a veil is fallen to obscure
The elder radiance of all lovely things—
The vision of a day when thought found wings
To uplift me to calm altitudes and pure,
Far, far remote from wishes that immure
The conscious soul, and dull her when she sings
With thoughts of the captivity time brings,
And of the cold hard world's investiture.
Yet is the veil not lasting. I will rend
This poor thin gossamer of self away :
Not what I am, but what I freely may,
Is my endowment. If I never lend
One added grace to Nature can her power
Be less to soothe me in a selfless hour ?

(11.)

UNDER the happy sky when summer swells
Earth's ripening bosom with new ravishment,
And she, the mother of my heart's content,
Divinely smiles and uses her old spells,
O then I leave poor self—my spirit dwells
And finds new being in a single scent
Blown from the meadow, and is all intent
On sating ear and eye at the pure wells
Of sense, without a thought beyond the draught.
Or haply if the echo of a thought
Wing murmurously by—like a quick bird
Shaking a cadence for the winds to waft—
'Tis joy made vocal, indolently heard,
And passing swiftly, as it came unsought.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

WE should be standing now where KEATS has stood
In early years of happiness and hope :
O'er this wide heath and this green furzy slope
His poet's eye hath ranged, finding its food.
How keen the wintry air ! Yon ice-bound flood,
And these snow-patches levelling the dells,
With what rich colour do their frozen spells
Endow the herbage and the leafless wood !
Thou passionate lover of bright hues of earth,
'Thou shouldst be living' to see yon large orb
Sink redly o'er the snows, to feel the mirth
And the crystalline sparkle of this air—
The peace of this wide silence, and absorb
Into thy poet's heart a scene beyond compare !

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